

Randall Parrish

My Lady of Doubt



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e-artnow, 2022

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EAN 4066338125286

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CHAPTER I

A PERILOUS MISSION

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Several of us had remained rather late that evening about the cheerful fire in front of my hut—for the nights were still chilly, although it was May, and the dreadful winter passed—discussing the improved condition of our troops, the rigid discipline of Baron de Steuben, and speculating on what would probably be attempted now that Sir Henry Clinton had succeeded to the command of the forces opposing us. I remember Maxwell joined us, together with Knox of the artillery, each man with a different theory of campaign, but alike agreeing that, in spite of all we had endured during those months of suffering and privation at Valley Forge, the time to strike once again was near at hand, although our numbers were barely half that of the enemy.

It must have been midnight when I crept into a bunk, and, even then, found sleep absent, my eyes gazing out through the open door to where the embers of the fire glowed red, and a sentinel paced back and forth in regular monotony. Suddenly he halted, and challenged hoarsely, flinging forward his gun. There was an indistinguishable answer, and, as I straightened up, the figure of a man blotted out the doorway.

"Major Lawrence?"

"Yes. What is it?" I swung to the floor, unable to recognize the voice. The man's hand rose to salute.

"I am Colonel Gibbs' orderly. General Hamilton wishes you to report at once at headquarters."

"The Potts house?"

"Yes, sir."

I dressed hastily, my pulses throbbing with eagerness. Whatever the message meant, there was certainly some purpose of vital importance in sending for me at this unusual hour, and I was boy enough still to welcome any form of active service. No duty of the war had so tried me as the long winter of waiting. Yet, rapidly as I moved, the orderly had disappeared before I got outside, and I picked my way as best I could alone through the darkness, along the rear of McIntosh's huts, until I reached the low fence surrounding the Potts house. Here a sentinel challenged, calling the corporal of the guard, and in his company I trudged up the path to the front door. There was a light showing through a window to the left, although the shade was closely drawn, and a guard stood within the hall. At the first sound of our approach, however, a side door was flung open, letting forth a gleam of illumination, and I perceived the short, slight figure of Hamilton, as he peered forward to get a better glimpse of my face.

"All right, Corporal," he said tersely, gripping my hand. "Come in, Major; your promptness would seem to indicate a readiness to get into service once more."

"I had not yet fallen asleep," I explained, "but we are all eager enough for action of any description."

He smiled cheerily.

"You will soon be busy, never fear." He closed the door behind us, and, with a glance, I viewed the room and its

occupants. It was a small, low ceilinged apartment, containing a table, a dozen chairs, and a high commode. A few coals glowed in the wide fireplace, and the walls were dingy with smoke. Three candles, already burning low, gave fitful illumination, revealing four occupants, all known to me. At an open door to the right stood a sweet-faced woman, glancing back curiously at my entrance, and I whipped off my hat bowing low. Once before I had seen her, Mistress Washington, and welcomed the gracious recognition in her eyes. Colonel Gibbs stood before the fireplace motionless, but my glance swept past him to the calm, uplifted face above the pile of papers littering the table. He was not looking at me, but his eyes were turned toward his wife.

"It is not necessary for you to retire," he said quietly. "We shall not detain this gentleman except for a few moments."

"It is not because of the Major's coming I withdraw," she replied pleasantly, "but the hour is late, and I am very tired. Good-night, all."

Washington's eyes were upon the door until it closed; then he turned slightly, facing me. Before he spoke again, Hamilton broke in:

"This is the officer, sir, recommended by General Maxwell—Major Lawrence of the Maryland Line."

I bowed silently, and the commander rose to his feet, extending his hand.

"No doubt we have met before," he said slowly. "You have been with us for some time?"

"My first action was at Harlem, sir."

"You could not have been at Valley Forge during the past winter, however?"

"I was with the Marquis de la Fayette at Albany."

"Ah, yes," his face clouding at the recollection. "A young officer, Hamilton, but capable, no doubt. You have used him before, you said?"

"Yes, at Long Island, and he entered New York once at my request."

Washington's gray eyes were still on my face.

"Lawrence is a Massachusetts name."

"Not exclusively," I returned, "as our branch are Virginians."

The stern lines about the mouth relaxed into a smile.

"Indeed; from the Eastern shore then. I recall now having once met a Judge John Lawrence, whose wife was a Lee."

"My father, sir."

His hand rested firm on my shoulder, as his glance turned to Hamilton.

"I require no further commendation, Colonel. You will find the papers in the second drawer. Please explain all the details carefully to Major Lawrence."

He bowed toward me, and sank back once more into his chair, one hand shading the eyes that still regarded us. Hamilton opened the drawer designated, extracted an official document, and addressed me rapidly in lowered voice.

"This is a simple duty, Major, but may prove a dangerous one. You have been selected because of previous successful efforts of a similar nature, but the Commander-in-chief does not order your going; we seek a volunteer."

"Without asking the nature of the service," I answered sincerely, "I rejoice at the privilege."

"I knew that, Lawrence," heartily. "That answer accords with your well earned reputation throughout the army. I will explain briefly the situation. Early this evening our pickets—or rather some partisan scouts near Newtown—captured a British officer, in field uniform, on his way from New York to Sir William Howe in Philadelphia. The prisoner was brought here, and on examination proved to be Lieutenant Edgar Fortesque of the 42nd Regiment of Foot. These troops came over with the last detachment, and arrived in New York less than a month ago. On searching Fortesque's clothing we found this despatch," holding out the sealed paper, "which we opened. It is not of any great military importance, being merely an order for Howe to proceed at once to New York, taking with him certain officers of his staff, and placing a naval vessel at his disposal."

He paused, turning the paper over in his hands.

"However," he went on slowly, "it affords us the opportunity we have long been seeking of getting a competent military observer into Philadelphia. Now that Sir Henry Clinton is in command of the British forces directly opposing us, it is necessary that we know accurately their number, state of discipline, guns, and any point of weakness in the defences of the city. We require also information regarding the division of troops under Sir Henry's command—the proportion of British, Hessians, and Tories, together with some inkling as to Clinton's immediate plans. There is a rumor abroad that Philadelphia is to be evacuated, and that the British forces contemplate a retreat overland to New York. Civilian fugitives drift into our camp constantly, bearing all manner of wild reports, but these accounts are

so varied as to be practically valueless. We must possess accurate details, and to gain these a man would need to be in the city several days, free to move about, observe, and converse with the officers of the garrison. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, sir; you propose forwarding the despatch by an officer who shall impersonate this captured Lieutenant."

"Exactly. Fortesque is a young fellow about your age, and build. He has been in the army only eight months, and in this country less than thirty days. It is scarcely probable he is known personally to any of the present Philadelphia garrison. There is a risk, of course, but in this case it would seem to be small." He picked up a paper from off the table. "Here is an officer's roster of the 42nd Regiment. It might be well for you to familiarize yourself with a few of the names."

I studied the list a moment, bending down closer to the nearest candle, while rapidly reviewing in my own mind the duty required. I had no thought of refusal, yet appreciated to the full the possible danger of the venture, and felt anxious to make no serious mistake. I had achieved a reputation for reckless daring, yet this kind of service was hardly to my liking. To wear British uniform meant my condemnation as a spy, if discovered, and a death of disgrace. I had been within the lines of the enemy often before, but always as a scout, wearing the homespun of the Maryland Line, but this was to be a masquerade, a juggling with chance. I was not greatly afraid of being unmasked by the officers of the garrison, but there were those then in Philadelphia who knew me—loyalists, secret sympathizers with our cause, and not a few deserters from the army—

whom I might encounter at any turn in the road. The prospect was not alluring, yet a glance aside at the profile of Washington, now bending low over a mass of papers, instantly stiffened my resolve. It was work I had no excuse to shirk—indeed no inclination—so I returned Hamilton's glance of inquiry frankly.

"You wish me to go at once?"

"The earlier the better. I will furnish passports through our lines, and hard riding will put you across the neutral ground by daylight."

"One moment, Major," interrupted Washington quietly. "You were doubtless acquainted with our late Inspector-General?"

"Yes," my face darkening.

"He is now in Philadelphia, and it might be safer were you to avoid meeting him."

"General Washington," I said frankly, "I have been loyal to you through all this controversy, but, nevertheless, have retained my friendship with General Conway. I believe the misunderstanding between you is entirely personal, and in no way affects his loyalty to the cause. Whatever his present relations may be with the British commander, I have the utmost faith that he would not betray me to either death, or imprisonment."

"I am glad to hear your words," and the kindly face instantly brightened. "This entire controversy has been most unfortunate, with wrong no doubt upon both sides. Unquestionably you are right, yet I felt it my duty to warn you of his presence at Clinton's headquarters. God bless you, my boy, good-bye."

I grasped the hand extended across the table, and followed Hamilton from the room, Gibbs still standing motionless and silent before the fireplace.

CHAPTER II

WITHIN THE ENEMY'S LINES

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A long cavalry cape concealing the British uniform I wore, my horse and myself were ferried across the Schuylkill, just below the mouth of Valley Creek, and there, amid the silence and darkness of the eastern shore, I parted with Hamilton, who had accompanied me thus far, whispering final words of instruction. My horse was a fresh one, chosen from the stables of the Life Guard, but the trappings were of the British service. Within five minutes I was out of sight of the picket fire on the river bank, riding steadily southeast through the night, every nerve alert. An hour's riding found me well beyond our outermost pickets, yet, in fear that I might encounter some body of irregulars, scouting the neutral ground, I held on to my passport until I perceived the first flush of dawn in the east. Then, convinced of close proximity to the British guard-lines, I tore the paper into fragments. Avoiding all roads, and seeking every bit of concealment possible, it was already sunrise before I plunged suddenly into a Hessian picket-post, the distant smoke of the Philadelphia chimneys darkening the sky ahead. Unable to speak German, my uniform won sufficient courtesy, so that I was escorted back under guard to an outpost of the Queen's Rangers, where I explained my presence and rank to a red-faced Captain in Tory green, so insolent in manner as to be insulting, until I exhibited the

sealed despatch, and demanded to be escorted at once to Sir William Howe. This brought results, and I entered the city under escort of a dozen horsemen, their green coats faced with dingy white, cocked hats flapping as they rode.

It was thus we came to Callowhill, and the encampment of British grenadiers, an officer of the 55th Regiment volunteering to guide me to Howe's quarters in High Street. He was a genial fellow, and pointed out various places of interest, as we rode more slowly through the streets close along the river-side, questioning me often upon affairs in New York, to which I returned such vague answers as pleased me, paying small heed to the truth. I had never known Philadelphia well, but now it was so strange as to be peculiarly interesting, many of the houses deserted, with doors and windows boarded; several of the churches made over into barracks, or riding-schools; the market closed; the State House filled with lounging officers; and the streets thronged, even at this early hour, by a varied uniformed soldiery, speaking Cockney English, the jargon of the counties, Scottish Gaelic, or guttural German, as they elbowed their passage, the many scarlet jackets interspersed with the blue of artillery and cavalry, the Hessian red and yellow, the green of the rifle-corps, or the kilts of the Highlanders. Lancers and Huzzars, Grenadiers, Light Dragoons and Queen's Rangers mixed, and commingled, apparently enjoying holiday. There was scarcely a woman to be seen; the few who did appear being of the lower sort. All along the river were redoubts, well garrisoned, with black gun muzzles pointing out across the water. Many houses had been razed, and their *débris*,

together with the fire ruin of the past winter, gave to everything a look of desolation. Much artillery was parked in the State House yard, and several vessels of war were lying at anchor in the stream, while the entire shore line was filled with barges, decorated as for a *fête*, a large force of men laboring about them. My companion, observing my interest attracted in that direction, reined up his horse to explain.

"Those are the galleys being made ready for the *Mischianza*, Fortesque," he said, waving his hand. "You came to us at a lucky hour."

"The *Mischianza*?" I asked, puzzled by the strange term. "Some festival, you mean?—some gala day?"

"'Tis an Italian word, they tell me, signifying medley. The officers give it in farewell to Sir William, who will sail tomorrow. A pretty penny it costs. See, there is Major O'Hara now, one of the managers; there are three others, Sir John Wrottlesly, Major Gardiner, and the chief engineer, Montresor. Do you know them? No? Oh, I had forgotten you have only just arrived. You will know them 'ere long, however, for they are the leaders in such affairs. That is Captain André there with O'Hara." He waved his hand, and the younger officer lifted his cocked hat in acknowledgment. "Let us spur over there, Lieutenant, until I get you a ticket of invitation."

I followed, careless of the loss of time so I could both see and hear.

"André, this is Lieutenant Fortesque just in from New York with despatches for Howe. I have promised him a ticket for to-night."

The young officer laughingly extended a hand.

"The more the merrier, Craig. With the 42nd I see, sir; knew your Colonel well. You'll find America isn't so bad, after you get used to it. We've had a gay time here, eh, O'Hara? The best of liquor, and the prettiest of girls, and now we'll show the town something it won't forget in a hurry." He held out a card to me. "Rather ornate, considering the printers in these colonies; designed it myself."

It was certainly a handsome souvenir, perhaps six inches by four in size, engraved as in a shield, yielding a view of the sea, with the setting sun, and on a wreath the words, "*Lucco discendens, ancto splendore resurgam*," while at the top was the General's crest, bearing the words, "*Vive Vale*." I have it yet, but as I looked at it then, sitting my horse on the river bank, and listening to the careless laughter of those about me, I could think only of that other half-starved army in whose camp I had been the evening before, and of those scenes of suffering witnessed during the past winter at Valley Forge—the shoeless feet, the shivering forms, the soldiers dying from cold and hunger, the snow drifting over us as we slept. What a contrast between this foolish boy's play, and the stern man's work yonder. Somehow the memory stiffened me to the playing of my own part, helping me to crush back bitter words that I might exhibit the same spirit of recklessness shown by those about me.

"A fine conceit, indeed," I confessed, "and if the pageant be equal to its promise 'twill be well worth the seeing. What is the purpose, gentlemen?"

"To give Sir William fit farewell," returned André, pleased at my unstinted praise. "And now that the Lord has sent us a fine day, I can promise a festival worthy the herald. But,

Fortesque, if you would have audience with Howe, I advise you to get on, for he will have few spare moments between now and day-dawn to-morrow."

We parted with much bowing, Craig and I guiding our horses through the crowded streets, being kept too busy avoiding accidents to exchange conversation. Howe's headquarters on High Street were not pretentious, and, except for a single sentinel posted at the door, were unguarded. I was admitted without delay, being ushered into a large room containing merely tables and chairs, the latter littered with papers. An aide took my name, and within a very few moments Sir William himself entered through a rear door, attired in field uniform. He was of imposing figure, fully six feet in height, well proportioned, and with a thoughtful, kindly face. He greeted me with much affability, glancing hastily over the papers handed him, and then into my face.

"These do not greatly change my former plans," he said, "but I am glad to know I can retain my present staff. There was no special news in New York, Lieutenant?"

"None of particular importance, I believe, sir. We landed only a short time ago."

"Yes. I understand. You were fortunate to get through here so easily—the Jerseys are a hotbed of rebellion. Do you return with me by water?"

"I believe that was left to my own discretion. I should be glad of a day or two in Philadelphia."

"Easily arranged. While I shall leave the city to-morrow so as to give Clinton a fair field, I shall remain on Lord Howe's flag-ship for some little time previous to final departure for

New York. You had better mess here with my staff. Mabry," turning to the aide, "see that Lieutenant Fortesque has breakfast, and procure him a pass good indefinitely within our lines. You will pardon my withdrawal, as the officers of the garrison promise me an exceedingly busy day. We will meet again, no doubt."

He clasped my hand warmly, and withdrew, leaving me alone with the aide, half-ashamed, I confess, of having been compelled to deceive. Yet the very ease of it all stimulated endeavor, and I conversed lightly with Mabry over the mess table, and, when the orderly returned with the necessary pass, I was keen to start upon my round of inspection, utterly forgetful of having been up, and in saddle, all night. Mabry could not leave his duties to accompany me, but courteously furnished a fresh horse, and assigned a private of dragoons to guide me about the city. By ten o'clock we were off, my only fear being the possible meeting with some acquaintance.

In this, however, I was happily disappointed, as there were few civilians on the streets, the throngs of soldiers, off duty for a holiday, with all discipline relaxed, being boisterous, and considerably under the influence of liquor. Quarrels between them were frequent, the British regulars and Loyalists seldom meeting without exchange of words and blows. The uniform worn, together with my dragoon guard, saved me from trouble, and I found the fellow sufficiently intelligent to be of value. I dare not make notes, and yet recall clearly even now the stations of the troops, together with a clear mental outline of the main defences of the city. I made no attempt to pass beyond the limits, but,

from statements of the dragoon, and various officers with whom I conversed, mapped in my mind the entire scheme of defence. Briefly stated, the line of intrenchments from the Delaware to the Schuylkill extended from the mouth of Conoquonaque Creek, just above Willow Street, to the Upper Ferry, nearly on a line with Callowhill Street. These consisted of ten redoubts, connected with strong palisades, all redoubts well garrisoned by seasoned troops, the Queen's Rangers being at the extreme right. Within the city proper were the reserves, so scattered in various encampments as to be easily mobilized, and yet kept separated. To the north were the Hessians, and next to these came three regiments of British Grenadiers, with a body of Fusileers. Eight regiments of the line occupied the slight eminence known as Bush's Hill, while close to the Ferry was another encampment of Hessians. The Yagers, horse and foot, were upon another hill near the river, and below them a large body of infantry of the line. The Light Dragoons and three infantry regiments were near a small pond. At the Middle Ferry was the 71st Regiment, and a body of Yagers were at the Point House, opposite Gloucester. Many of these locations were then outside the city, which extended at that time from Christian Street on the south, to Callowhill on the north, being widest between Arch and Walnut, where it expanded from Delaware to Ninth. However, I visited a number of these encampments, finding in each merely a small guard retained for the day, the majority of the troops being off on liberty. Soon after noon these began to throng the water front, eager to view the coming spectacle. I was, myself, in the Yager's camp, finishing a late lunch, with a

few officers, when the announcement came that the water procession had started.

CHAPTER III

THE FÊTE OF THE AFTERNOON

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I confess that up to this time I had experienced little interest in the affair. After Valley Forge it was hard for an American soldier to admire such boy's play, or to enter into the spirit of British fun making. Besides the danger of my position, the fear of some slip of tongue betraying me, the knowledge that I was in the very heart of the enemy's camp, with grim, stern duties to perform and a return journey to accomplish, kept me nerved to a point where I thought of little else than my task. But now I dared not remain indifferent, and, indeed, the enthusiasm of my companions became contagious, and I joined with them eagerly, as they hurried forth to the best point of view. Once there the sight revealed aroused me to an enthusiasm scarcely less than that of those crowding about. Few, indeed, have ever witnessed so gorgeous a spectacle as that river presented, and I have found many since who have questioned my description. Yet I write down here only what I saw with my own eyes, little understanding at the time its importance to my future life.

Well out in the stream lay the vessels of war—the *Fanny*, *Roebuck*, and *Vigilant*—together with a long line of transports, stretching as far as the eye could see, flags flying, and decks crowded with spectators. At the fore-mast head of the *Roebuck* fluttered the Admiral's flag, and the shoreline was jammed with soldiery, the varied uniforms a

maze of colors. The pageant came down with the tide, moving in three divisions to the inspiring music of several bands, the oars of galleys and barges keeping exact intervals. These were decked out with all manner of colors and streamers, and above fluttered the division flag. As they passed us, the officers beside me named the various occupants, but I recall now only the first and last, because of my interest in those aboard. In the leading galley were Sir William, Lord Howe, Sir Henry Clinton, the officers of their suites, and some ladies. Lord Howe was facing the other way, but I noticed that Clinton was short and fat, with a full face and prominent nose. In the last of the boats stood General Knyphausen, the Hessian commander, very much of a German in appearance, not tall, but slender and straight. Between these were flat-boats, covered with green cloth, loaded with ladies and gentlemen, or else containing bands. Six barges, darting here and there, kept open space amid the swarms of small boats. Everywhere the eye swept over a riot of color, and the ear caught a babel of sound. As the last barge glided by, the man next me growled in disgust:

"Those are lucky dogs off duty to-day." His eye caught mine. "Why don't you go after them, Fortesque? There will be plenty of fun afoot yonder where they land."

"Where is that?"

"At the old fort; follow the crowd, and you'll not go astray. Have you a ticket?"

"Captain André honored me with one this morning."

"Then you are good for the first row. Don't miss it, man," with enthusiasm. "'T will be such a sight as has not been witnessed since the Field of the Cloth of Gold."

"A passage at arms, you mean?"

"Ay! as gorgeous as those of the old-time knights; a fair conceit as I read the programme. I'd be there now but for the damned orders that hold me here. If you ride hard you can make the spot before they come ashore."

There was no reason I should not go, and much in the glittering prospect appealed to me. Five minutes later I was trotting out of the Yager camp, pressing passage through the crowds, already headed southward, the dragoon riding silently at my heels. Mounted men that day were few, and, doubtless believing we were connected with the pageant, the jam sullenly parted, and gave us opening, so we reached the site of the old fort as the barges began discharging their occupants. A glance about, however, convinced me as to where the lists were to be run, and I headed my horse in that direction, anxious to gain some point of vantage, before the throng poured in. Yet, Heaven knows, there were enough present even then, the green sward overrun, and the few stands crowded. Quite a considerable space, leading back from the river landing, had been roped off, and Light Dragoons rode along the lines to keep out invaders; others guarded the main platform until the more distinguished guests were seated. Few Philadelphia residents were present, although I saw some black coats, the crowd being mostly composed of soldiers bent upon frolic. In the occupied stands, however, were loyalists in plenty, with a considerable sprinkling of ladies, gaily attired. I saw all this while striving to spur my horse forward toward where a band played "God save the King," but should have failed to make it, had not Major O'Hara

caught glimpse of my face above the press. A moment he stared at me in perplexity, and then with a dab of his spur forced the black horse he rode against the ropes.

"Damn me if I knew you, Fortesque," he exclaimed cordially. "But come on through; there's a gate yonder. Fall back now, lads, and let the officer pass. That's it; ride 'em down if they won't make way. Here's a spot where you can see the whole field from the saddle."

I was somewhat to the right of the big stand, the restive heels of my horse keeping the crowd away, and with a clear view as far as the river bank. O'Hara was too busy to stop long, but I was not sorry, as there was sufficient occurring to rivet attention. It was, maybe, four hundred yards down a gentle slope to the water's edge, where the line was forming. This passageway was lined with onlookers, held back by numerous guards, while to my left extended a square lawn, perhaps one hundred and fifty yards each way, surrounded by a double rank of grenadiers, the bayonets gleaming on their guns. This open space was equipped with everything needed for the coming tourney, and on three sides were tiers of raised seats. I had barely observed all this when the guns of the *Roebuck*, echoed by those of the *Vigilant*, began to boom a salute, and the head of the column of marchers began slowly mounting the slope. All the bands of the garrison were in front, followed by the managers, richly attired, with badges of blue and white ribbon on their breasts. Behind these appeared, in full dress uniform, gleaming with decorations and medals, the three specially honored guests, the two generals and the admiral, the others of the gay party following two by two in long,

interesting procession. The costumes worn were as varied as those of a masquerade, representing all the changes since the days of chivalry. The whole line glowed with color, and gleamed with steel.

Like some great serpent, glittering in the sun, this procession passed under the triumphal arches, and disappeared as its members took prescribed positions on the stands, or in the pavilions bordering the field of contest. As thus arranged the grouping of colors was most brilliant. In the front of each pavilion were seven young ladies, attired picturesquely in Turkish costume, wearing in their turbans those favors with which they meant to reward the knights contending in their honor. Behind these, and occupying all the upper seats, were the maidens representing the two divisions of the day's sports—ladies of the Blended Rose, and ladies of the Burning Mountain. The first wore a white silk, called a polonaise, forming a flowing robe, open to the waist; the pink sash was six inches wide, and filled with spangles; the shoes and stockings were also spangled, and, above all, arose a towering head-dress, filled with a profusion of pearls and jewels; the veil was spangled, and edged with silver lace. The ladies of the Burning Mountain were similarly dressed, except that they wore white sashes, edged with black, and all their trimmings were of that color. As the veils were thrown back, and I looked on the bright, animated faces, I thought I had never before seen such an array of beauty. From the crowd surging around I heard name after name mentioned, as famous Philadelphia belles were pointed out, not a few familiar to me, through remembrance of our own former occupancy of the city—

Miss Craig, the Misses Chew, Miss Redmond, Miss Bond, the Misses Shippen, and others, all of loyalist families, yet content to play the game of hearts with both armies. Even as I gazed upon that galaxy of beauty, half angry that Americans should take part in such a spectacle of British triumph, the field was cleared for the lists, and a sound of trumpets came to us from a distance.

Out into the opening rode the contending knights, attended by esquires on foot, dressed in ancient habits of white and red silk, and mounted on gray horses. From the other direction appeared their opponents, in black and orange, riding black steeds, while to the centre advanced the herald loudly proclaiming the challenge. I knew not who they all were, but they made a gallant show, and I overheard many a name spoken of soldiers met in battle—Lord Cathcart, Captain André, Major Tarlton, Captain Scott. Ay! and they fought well that day, those White and Black Knights on the mimic field, first charging together, shivering their spears; the second and third encounters discharging pistols; and in the fourth attacking with swords in most gallant combat. At last the two chiefs—Lord Cathcart for the Whites, and Captain Watson, of the Guards, for the Blacks—were alone contending furiously, when the marshal of the field rushed in between, and struck up their weapons, declaring the contest done, the honor of each side proven. As the company broke up, flowing forward to the great house beyond, the vast crowd of onlookers burst through the guard-lines, and, like a mighty torrent, swept over the field. It was a wild, jubilant, yelling mass, so dense as to be

irresistible, even those of us on horseback being pressed forward, helpless chips on the stream.

I endeavored to press back, but my restive animal, startled by the dig of the spur, the yells, the waving of arms, refused to face the tumult, and whirled madly about. For a moment I all but lost control, yet, even as he plunged rearing into the air, I saw before me the appealing face of a woman. How she chanced to be there alone, in the path of that mob, I know not; where her escort had disappeared, and how she had become separated from her party, has never been made clear. But this I saw, even as I struggled with the hard-mouthed brute under me—a slender, girlish figure attired as a lady of the Blended Rose, a white, frightened face, arms outstretched, and dark blue eyes beseeching help. Already the front of the mob was upon her, unable to swerve aside because of the thousands pushing behind. In another moment she would be underfoot, or hurled into the air. Reckless of all else I dug in my spurs, yelling to the Light Dragoon beside me, even as my horse leaped. I felt the crush of bodies, hands gripped my legs; soldiers were hurled right and left, cursing as they fell. I must have hurt some, but had no thought except to reach her before it was too late. I was struck twice by missiles, yet burst through, my horse, by this time, frenzied with fear. I scarcely know what happened, or how it was accomplished—only I had the reins gripped in my teeth, both my hands free. That instant I caught her; the next she was on my arm, swung safely to the saddle, held to me with a grip of steel, the animal dashing forward beneath his double burden into the open field. Then the Dragoon, riding madly, gripped the

bit, and the affair was over, although we must have galloped a hundred yards before the trembling horse was brought to a stand. Leaving him to the control of the soldier, I sprang to the ground, bearing the lady with me. We were behind one of the pavilions, facing the house, and she reeled as her feet touched the earth, so that I held her from falling. Then her lashes lifted, and the dark blue eyes looked into my face.

"You must pardon my roughness," I apologized, "but there was no time for ceremony."

She smiled, a flood of color coming back into the clear cheeks, as she drew slightly away.

"I appreciate that, sir," frankly, shaking out her ruffled skirts, "and you have made knighthood real."

"Then," I ventured, "may I hope to receive the reward, fair lady?"

She laughed, a little tremor of nervousness in the sound, but her eyes full of challenge.

"And what is that?"

"Your name; the hope of better acquaintance."

Her eyes swept my uniform questioningly.

"You are not of the garrison?"

"No; a courier just arrived from New York."

"Yet an officer; surely then you will be present to-night?"

"The privilege is mine; if sufficiently tempted I may attend."

"Tempted! How, sir?"

"By your pledging me a dance."

She laughed again, one hand grasping the long silken skirt.

"You ask much—my name, a better acquaintance, a dance—all this for merely saving me from a mob. You are not a modest knight, I fear. Suppose I refuse?"

"Then am I soldier enough to come unasked, and win my welcome."

"I thought as much," the long lashes opening up to me the depths of the blue eyes. "I promise nothing then, nor forbid. But there is Captain Grant seeking me. If I do not speak of gratitude, it is nevertheless in my heart, sir," she swept me a curtsey, to which I bowed hat in hand, "and now, *Au revoir*."

I stood as she left me, staring while she crossed the lawn and joined a dark-faced officer of Rangers. Once she glanced back over her shoulder, and then disappeared in the crowd of revellers.

CHAPTER IV

THE MISCHIANZA

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I had not intended to remain in Philadelphia through the night. Already I had secured the information sought, and now must consider the safest and quickest method of escape. It seemed to me this night, given up to revelry, afforded the best possible opportunity for my safely passing the British guard-lines. To-morrow discipline would be resumed, the soldiers would return to their posts and the citizens of the city would again appear on the streets. This would greatly intensify my danger, for, at any moment, I might encounter some one who knew me, who might denounce me to the authorities.

That this was the exact truth of the situation could not be denied, yet, now, every reckless impulse of my disposition urged me to remain; the invitation of those laughing blue eyes, the challenge I read in the lady's fair face, the unsolved mystery of her identity, all combined in a temptation I found it impossible to resist. As I rode slowly northward, out of the denser crowd into the almost deserted streets, the shades of evening already closing about me, the memory of the girl I had encountered so strangely, and parted with so suddenly, became more and more alluring, more and more vivid. My thoughts dwelt upon the arch face, the red lips, smiling to reveal the white teeth, the flushing cheeks, the mass of soft brown hair revealed beneath the