# The Case of Lady Broadstone

A THRILLING STORY OF LOVE, MONEY AND INTRIGUE.

By

**Arthur Marchmont**

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SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

**Dorrison, in dire need of money, goes to Broadstone and finds his cousin in the same fix. He conceives the idea of getting rid of Eva's brother, Jack, whose money will go to Eva.**

**"Cast-Iron John" Petherby, a multi-millionaire, forces his daughter, Eva, to marry Lord Broadstone, exiling her lover, Ben Stanwell. Lord Broadstone had been married in America under an alias, and left his wife for dead, having tried to poison her. His cousin, Gilbert Dorrison, heir to the title, discovers she is living. Meanwhile, she has a son, and has inherited wealth. She goes to England to search for her husband. Dorrison, who is on the steamer, tries to marry her for her money, but she knows his intention and cleverly humiliates him.**

**Sadie, the first wife, discovers her husband is Lord Broadstone. Under the name of Margaret Hutchinson she gets a position as Eva's maid.**

**Jack, while visiting Eva, goes sailing with Dorrison. Sadie, through a field-glass, sees the boat capsize.**

**Jack was brought in dead. Sadie takes from his wrist a silk cord. Eva is ill from the shock. She sees Don at the funeral.**

**Sadie finds a book on poisons lying open in the library, and later finds arsenic in some candy her husband gave Eva. She keeps careful watch over Eva, being afraid of Dorison's intentions.**

## CHAPTER XX.

### CAUGHT.

Gardiner had told the truth for once. Dorrison had called him into the little smoking room snuggery after dinner and producing a number of bank notes had made a show of keeping his word.

As soon as he learned that Gardiner had the cords on him—the piece stolen from Sadie and the length from which it had been cut—he started a heated wrangle about the amount of wages due. In the middle of it, he appeared to lose his temper, and seizing the valet by the throat shook him violently, threw him on to a couch and took the cords from him.

"Now you can go to the devil," he said coolly. "And, mark you, if you tell any tales about me, you'll cool your heels and your temper in gaol. I know enough about you to get you a good long term of imprisonment. And now, get out—to try and blackmail me with a pack of infernal lies!"

Gardiner was too much afraid of his master to offer any resistance alone, and he slunk to the door like a whipped hound.

Broadstone entered at that moment, however, and keeping behind him he said: "My lord, I've something to tell you. Mr. Dorrison—"

But Dorrison was up in a moment. "Look here, Gardiner, I've shown you my lenient side so far. You've been with me for some years, and I don't want to ruin you unless you force me. Most men would have had a policeman here to-night, and would have given you in charge straight away for trying blackmail. Say another word and I'll have one fetched and give you in custody. Get out while the door's still open, and leave the house, too. If I catch you here to-morrow morning, you go to gaol as sure as your name is Gardiner."

He went then, and Dorrison turned back to his chair and lit a cigar.

"What's all the row about?" asked Broadstone.

"The infernal idot tried to jump me, and squeeze a thousand pounds out of me for these;" and he pulled the two cords from his pocket. "This is the bit that woman Hutchinson upstairs cut from Jack's wrist, and this is a bit to match it—which he wants to make out I had in my possession. Nice little yarn, eh?"

Broadstone whistled and swore softly.

"You have some nerve, Dorrison, to treat him like that. I couldn't have done it."

"I've got them now, so what matter? I'll keep my word with him, too. If he doesn't clear out to-night I'll charge him to-morrow."

"But if those things were produced they might——"

"Well, might what?"

"Nothing," said Broadstone; and he mixed himself a whisky and soda, and lit a cigar.

The incident set him thinking. It quickened his fear of his cousin, and he was willing to give a big sum of money to get rid of him. If only Gardiner had come to him instead of Dorrison, there would have been a very different interview. If he could get hold of those cords would the valet and the other woman uphold stand to that evidence?

Dorrison was the stumbling block to everything. It was only he who knew about that first marriage; it was he who was goading him now to the thing from which his cowardice, not his honour shrank.

If Dorrison were only put out of his path.

"You're very silent, Bertram," broke in Dorrison, who had been watching him furtively but closely. "What is it?"

"Nothing."

"For a man who was thinking of nothing you were pretty deeply absorbed. Out with it, man."

"Well, I was thinking you've made a fool of yourself. That fellow of yours will blab everything he knows."

"Of course, I don't know what he knows, but——"

"And if he does?"

"Confound your broken sentences. Why can't you finish them?" cried Dorrison testily. "You've got something at the back of your mind. I can see that. What is it?"

"Hang it, man, don't talk to me like that. I'm not your servant, am I? I'm not bound to shout all my thoughts into a phonograph for your benefit, I suppose."

"Will it help things for us to quarrel, Bertram?"

"Well, don't do it then," was the answer in a surly tone.

They both smoked awhile in silence, and then Dorrison said coolly: "If you won't tell me, I'll tell you. I saw you squinting rather covetously at these two little bits of evidence, and you were thinking that you'd like to use them. Try it, Bertram, if you think you dare;" and with a nonchalant air he held the cords toward his cousin.

Their eyes met for a moment, and Broadstone was the first to drop his. "Don't be a fool . . . I wasn't thinking anything of the sort."

"So much the better," said Dorrison drily, as he dropped the "evidence," back in his pocket.

Another long gap in the conversation followed, and again Dorrison broke the silence. "I have been thinking this time, Bertram," he said, "and I'll tell you my decision. What you've got to do must be done to-night."

"To-night, man! What do you mean?"

Dorrison looked across the table at him through partly shut lids and answered very deliberately: "You see, it's this way. If you were not thinking what I believed you were just now, I may have put the thought into your head. And I don't want any trouble of that sort. If it is not done to-night, to-morrow morning I shall tell the little lady upstairs that she's not your wife but your—— I'll give you a broken sentence this time." He put his cigar back in his mouth with a smile.

Broadstone emptied his glass and smoked for a minute in silence, passing his hand across his forehead and sighing with a sigh: I sha'n't do it, Dorrison. I funk it."

"Very well; then we'll ring the curtain down on my ladyship to-morrow morning. She becomes Miss Eva Petherby again. She will return to her Varnish Castle and take her million and a half with her, and her child will be born there—an illegitimate."

"Shut up, Dorrison!" growled his lordship with an angry oath.

"The best thing you can do will be to shoot yourself—or use that syringe on yourself. It's an easy death and dead certain. Better than a bigamy prosecution—and I expect Miss Petherby's new friend will take care that this is set going. A very small part of the million will find number one, and I can prove that you did it knowingly."

"Do you mean you'd be bound enough to say a word about that?" cried Broadstone with a furious oath.

Dorrison laughed. "You wouldn't expect to find me very friendly to the man who first tries to rush me out of the estates and then turns on me as you are doing."

"Turns on you—because I won't murder my wife. By Heaven, you're cool hand."

"She isn't your wife. She's just an unfortunate obstacle in the path of us both, richly gilded and with no respect but misery and shame ahead of her. If she knew the truth she would probably rather die than face it. These middle-class people are so delicately sensitive about such things. If it were Gertrude Hamyl now——"

"Stop that, Dorrison! Don't bring her into this."

"It 's you who want to bring her into it, not I. I don't care what becomes of her; and for all I care she can marry young——"

A fierce oath from Broadstone interrupted him. "I told you to stop it, didn't I?"

"Yes; but I'm not going to be silent at your bidding. This is a free country and free speech is one of the few privileges left. You're a coward, you know, Bertram. That's all. You've been trying to do the very thing you now shy at in another way, and because you have to change the method you fly into a rage with me. You didnt hesitate about those pretty sweets, you know."

"A lot of good they were, too."

"Don't make any mistakes. The other woman was too sharp for you, somehow, and outwitted you—devilishly cleverly, too. She's got some scheme on now; that's why she wants to get Eva away. And if she does it, you may bet all you look to get out of that million and a half that you'll never see Eva back at Broadstone Towers again. I've a wholesome respect for Miss Margaret—she's a lot too clever for you."

"And so are you," replied Broadstone, after flinging a curse at Sadie. "And if anything happens to Eva, I should find it out."

"I told you, you had something of the kind in your head just now. Who put in there?"

"This;" and Broadstone tossed the anonymous letter across the table. Dorrison read it carefully and whistled.

"How the deuce did she know you had paid me that £5,000?"

"She? What she?"

"You're a mole, Bertram, if you can't see the Hutchinson watermark all over that paper. It's rather a compliment to me, anyway. The object was to separate us too. She's afraid of me, and doesn't care two bires of a thumb nail for you."

"Whoever sent it, it's true," said Broadstone, doggedly, watching Dorrison's face sullenly.

The latter looked up and their eyes met. With a shrug of the shoulders and a lifting of the eyebrows, he said: "I wish you weren't such a coward. You wouldn't see a sentence of death in an anonymous letter." He tossed the letter down contemptuously. "However, do as you please. It's quite clear the woman's dangerous. Who she is or why she's here, I don't know. She means to separate you from Eva and she'll do it. She came deuced near getting hold of this bit of evidence against me, and I don't doubt she'd have done her level best against me if Gardiner had gone straight to her with his yarn—but their teeth are drawn now, and they can't bite. You are just about as much a favorite with her as I am; and when she learns in the morning about the bigamy business, even you can guess what line she'll persuade Eva to take."

"I hate the woman," growled Broadstone with a curse.

"That won't do her much harm now. But we have her all the same, if you only had pluck enough. Do what I suggested the other night, and all her wits can't break through the net. It's on record that she bought the poison. A quantity of those pretty sweets are among her belongings. She is a mystery, at any rate, and in all probability when her life is looked into by the police, some pretty little things will be unearthed. I caught her reading up that poison book in the library. She has had absolute charge of Eva and not allowed a soul to go near her. Why, the case is as clear as an ink stain, without the trump card. You'll never have such a chance again."

Broadstone smoked awhile without replying. His face was clouded in troubled thought and his manner nervous and restless. "You are a devil to tempt. But it's too dangerous: I daren't."

"Has the likeness ever struck you? It must have. Why, I went straight from her the other morning, and had a look at the profile photograph of your wife, and except for the lower part of the face, the resemblance is extraordinary. The mouth isn't—the other had long, prominent teeth; but that wouldn't matter. It wasn't a pretty mouth, I should think, number one's?" he sneered.

"How the devil you can manage to laugh at such a moment beats me. If it could be done safe——" He paused

"Safely? Think . . . All the facts point one way—at the woman. None even hint at you. Given a motive and everything is proved. When it's over you discover who the woman is—and the rest follows."

"Yes; but——" Broadstone was in a maze of fear and hesitation.

"There are no 'buts' in it, Bertram. You didn't know it before, but she is your first wife who has stolen into the house to win into her confidence the woman who has taken her place, in order that she may kill her. I tell you there isn't a jury in England who wouldn't convict her. The things's as plain as an old woman."

He stopped suddenly and sat up. Then with a motion to Broadstone he rose and stole quickly but silently to the door which led to the dining room. Pausing a second he opened it quickly.

Sadie was standing there listening, and he seized her arm.

"Ah, come in, Miss Hutchinson. I thought I heard you. You'll hear better inside the room. Eavesdropping is rather a low-down sort of crude method. Come in."

## CHAPTER XXI.

### DORRISON BROUGHT TO BAY.

For the moment Sadie was too embarrassed to be capable of concealing her confusion

She had been scarcely a minute in her hiding place and had heard no more than Dorrison's last speech—that she was the first wife who had stolen into the house to get into her confidence the woman who had taken her place.

But she was quick to recover self-command, and before Dorrison's mocking smile had died away and Broadstone's anger had found voice, she shook her arm free impatiently and answered: "Yes, I will come, of course—after what I have heard."

"Then you admit you were eavesdropping?" asked Dorrison.

"You can choose any term you please—eavesdropping, spying, listening. There is need for it in this house."

"I should like to know what the devil—" began Broadstone furiously, when Dorrison stopped him.

"Hadn't you better leave this to me, Bertram? Miss Hutchinson, of course, understands that she had done that which will make it impossible for her to remain in the Towers——"

"I should think so," burst out his lordship, unable to restrain himself. "To sneak about listening and spying, after all my wife's kindness."

Sadie listened in surprise. She had not been recognised after all, it seemed; yet—and then the truth flashed upon her. They were going to swear to what they did not know in order to make it appear that he was trying to poison Eva.

She had a moment or two to think, for Dorrison had drawn his cousin aside and was whispering eagerly to him. Her ears were quick and she heard in a whisper from Dorrison the two words—"the balcony."

Directly afterwards Broadstone glanced furtively at her and turned to leave the room. She let him go without any attempt to stay him. He could do no harm that night.

She had used the half-hour since the talk with Dorrison to make a search in his lordship's bedroom. Not the first she had made. She had learnt where he locked away his secrets, and had found what she sought. He might now use the whole contents of the little phial if he liked, and no one would be one whit the wiser.

When he had gone, Dorrison turned to Sadie. "This is a very painful matter, Miss Hutchinson, but I have prevailed with Lord Broadstone to leave the whole matter entirely in my hands; and for Lady Broadstone's sake I wish to avoid any unnecessary scene."

"I am more aware than perhaps you think of your zeal on my friend's behalf, Mr. Dorrison. I think you may drop the mask. What you wish to say, be good enough to say plainly."

"You will of course leave the Towers."

"Oh, yes, of course. That is already arranged."

"I mean at once," he returned shortly.

"And I mean with Lady Broadstone when the time comes for us to start for the Continent."

"You will not see Lady Broadstone again."

"How do you propose to prevent me? You do not in the least frighten me, Mr. Dorrison."

"You will be prevented, if you make it necesary, by force. Lord Broadstone has gone to make arrangements, and if necessary, will send for the police, and you will be put out of the house."

"That would, perhaps, be the best and simplest plan. I will wait for them;" and Sadie sat down. She was now quite satisfied that she had not been recognised, and awaited the next development with no other concern except curiosity.

Dorrison on his side was not without anxiety. He did not quite know what to do. He had told his cousin no more than the truth when he said that he had a great deal of respect for Sadie. His cool nerve and resourceful wits had been amply proved, and he was not without a feeling of alarm.

"Who are you, and what is your purpose in coming here?"

"That is not sending for the police," said Sadie, quietly, and added with a smile: "I think you are more prudent to parley first."

"Why did you send an anonymous letter to Lord Broadstone?" he asked, suddenly, thinking to surprise her.

"The reason is purely obvious—to separate you and him. You are more dangerous than he is. I thought my friend would be safer if you did not return to the Towers."

"You admit then that you wrote that scurrilous libel?"

"Ah, you deem it a libel that anyone should charge you with having paid some of your debts with the £5,000 that you received from Lord Broadstone. I am aware it is not your habit to pay if you can avoid it."

"What do you mean?" he cried angrily.

"That a friend of mine is your creditor, Mr. Dorrison, and it is his business to know all your affairs."

"So you are here to spy on me, then," he sneered.

"I am resolved to protect Lady Broadstone from you."

"And you protect her by studying poisons, then?"

"Yes—arsenic," said Sadie, very deliberately.

"You will have to find someone else to believe that," he replied with a start of anger.

"I shall not find it that difficult at all. The poisoned chocolates you sent to Lord Broadstone are in my lawyer's hands. You are not a man I should fight without taking every precaution."

"How dare you make such a statement against me?"

"How dared you do the thing itself is more the question, sir!" and Sadie's tone was to the full as stern and resolute as his. "Ay, and how dared you to inculpate me by putting another box of the same sweets in my room? But there," she added, with a meaning smile, "I should rather thank you for that, for you left on the box the private mark of the firm who sold them, and my agents have traced the purchase. Yours is too marked a face not to be easily recognised. But surely only recklessness led you to go to a shop where you were well known."

This shaft got well home. He had counted upon anything rather than to have himself attacked so fearlessly.

"You have a gift for romance," he said, with a smirk. "Poisoned sweets, indeed!"

"It was romance that led me to substitute harmless sweets, and have those you sent analysed. An analyst's report is not usually called romance—at least by a judge and jury."

He made a vigorous effort not to show his growing uneasiness, and with an assumption of great sternness he said: "I had meant to deal leniently with you, Miss Hutchinson, and let you go; but these vile insinuations compel me to alter my decision. We know that your presence is dangerous to Lady Broadstone's safety, even to her life, and that you have had the hardihood even to purchase poison in the neighbourhood. You must answer for your conduct to the proper authorities."

"That completes the chain for me. Thank you. Evidently your accomplice, Gardiner, did not tell you he had failed to sign the poison register at Gregory's. I told Mr. Gregory I would make inquiries as to who had forged my name—I will let him know it was you. You are not so clever as I thought, or you would have held your tongue about that. You will have to explain why you needed arsenic, prussic acid, and a hypodermic syringe so badly that you obtained them in a false name. It is not a nice charge even for a member of Parliament to answer."

He laughed as if the thing were a preposterous absurdity, but the laugh did not cover his evident agitation. "You are vastly entertaining."

"You used to declare that and mean it," said Sadie slowly, after a pause.

He looked across at her swiftly, and recalling the resemblance she had always suggested to someone he could not place in his memory, tried hard to identify her.

"It was before you thought me an adventuress and before you told me your scheme to blackmail your cousin, with me to personate his first wife."

What a blind fool he had been not to recognise her before. He who plumed himself upon his memory for faces. "I compliment you upon your disguise, Mrs. Porlock. So you thought you would come down and earn the money yourself; and, having come, you found you could do better by imposing upon my cousin's wife."

"No, Mr. Dorrison, your sneers do not impose upon me any more than your threats frightened me just now. I have plenty of money without having to earn it by blackmail or—murder."

His anger at this was too great for even a pretence of laughter. He jumped to his feet and Sadie, watching him, rose as well. "Whatever your pretended motive here you confessed yourself an imposter—and shall be treated 'as such;" and he went to the bell.

"You had better be warned before you call the servants and force me to denounce you. There was a little piece of cord in existence—short and slight, but long enough and stout enough to hang a man. You tricked your servant to get possession of it, and it is on you now. A police search will find it and can give its history."

He turned at bay with his hand outstretched to the bell, and a look in his eyes made Sadie close her fingers on the revolver she carried in her pocket.

He thought a moment and then moved toward the door. "I shall call the servants."

"You will not leave the room, Mr. Dorrison;" and with that she drew her weapon. "I have lived in Mexico and can use this. Attempt to leave and I'll shoot you and explain why. That I charged you with the murder of young Jack Petherby; that I saw through a telescope what you did in the boat that day; and I shot you because you were seeking to fly, so that you might destroy the evidence you stole from your man."

There was murder in his thoughts as he stared into her eyes; but he dared not move, for he read there that she would make her word good. He turned back to the table. "What is it you want?"

"That evidence—the two cords."

"No!"

"Lord Broadstone will be here in a minute. You know how he fears you and how eagerly he would snatch at this chance of being rid of you. If those cords are not in my hands—and with them your life—when he comes back to this room, they will soon be his."

The sweat stood thick on his forehead in the high-wrought passion of the struggle in his mind. He knew the use Broadstone would make of them.

"What are you going to do if I give them up?" he asked sullenly.

"It will depend on you whether I use or destroy them."

Slowly, and with a sigh of anguish that rent him to the soul, he drew them from his pocket and held them out—his eyes alight with malice.

"Put them on the table and go to the other side of the room. I have dealt with your sort before," said Sadie.

He obeyed her, and she put them in her pocket.

"You will stay on that side of the room while Lord Broadstone is here; and you will tell him that you were both mistaken in me—ah, tell him what you please," she broke off contemptuously. "It is your skin you have to save, not mine."

"What is your object in all this?"

"Do you dare to question me? Wait—I will tell you. Keep silence about the fact of Lord Broadstone's first marriage and leave Broadstone to-night, and marry the girl you ruined—Gladys Llewellyn."

He started violently, and a bitter oath escaped him.

"Yes, I mean it," she cried sternly. "If you are in Broadstone to-morrow, you will sleep in the county gaol."

Lord Broadstone came in then, pale and trembling. Seeing Sadie, he summoned up enough resolution to show anger. "Are you still here?"

"Yes; but I am going back now to Eva;" and brushing past him she left the room.

## CHAPTER XXII

### ON MURDER BENT

Lord Broadstone looked after Sadie in amazement and then turned for an explanation to Dorrison.

"One too many for you, Gilbert?" he asked with a jibing laugh. "You don't look very pretty. Ruffled all your show-feathers, eh?"

Dorrison went back to the table, poured himself out a glass of wheat whisky, and gulped it down in silence, then lit a cigar and after a few turns up and down the room, decided on his course. "What have you done?" he asked, quickly.

Broadstone shook his head. "Nothing. No chance. But what of this woman?"

"I told you she was dangerous. She is. It is she who has queered everything. She got on to our plans somehow."

"What does she know?" asked Broadstone, nervously.

"She's a connoisseur in chocolates for one thing."

"The devil she is! What else."

(To be Continued)


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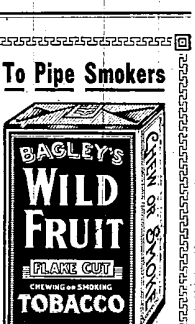


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