

**THE BLACK SQUIRE; OR, A  
LADY'S FOUR  
WISHES. A NOVEL, IN  
THREE VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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The black squire; or, A lady's four wishes. A novel, in three volumes, vol. II by Davus

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**DAVUS**

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*Charles Payne Hilchebrand*

# THE BLACK SQUIRE;

OR,

A LADY'S FOUR WISHES.

A Novel.

BY DAVUS.

'A document in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted.'  
HAMLET.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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## THE BLACK SQUIRE;

OR,

A LADY'S FOUR WISHES.

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### CHAPTER I.

'Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold.'  
*As You Like It.*

'KING HENRY. Stanley was once my friend, and came in time  
To save my life :—yet, to say truth, my lords,  
The man stayed long enough to endanger it.  
SURREY. . . . . 'Tis a king  
Composed of gentleness. . . . .  
DURHAM. . . . . Rare and unheard-of ;  
But every man is nearest to himself :  
And that the king observes.'  
*FORD—Perkin Warbeck.*

'WHAT has come to Dicky Gryffyn ?' was the common question among his acquaintance. What, indeed ? Why did he, that used to sleep so soundly, now spend his nights in restless tossings on a weary bed, where sleep, if it came at all, came broken and disturbed ; and all the day long thick-coming fancies, now frowning, now flattering, set his brain seething and his blood throbbing, and agitated every nerve of his fevered body. Joy and hope, desire and

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rashness, fear and jealousy, possessed and harassed him by turns. Her kindness and beauty and feminine grace, her soothing voice, her words, her looks, imprinted in consuming flame, burnt into his young heart the ineffaceable name. His communing with himself on this one vital subject never ceased; and hope and fear, self-restraint and self-will, alternately swayed his soul. What took place within him one day took place every day, almost every hour. The alternations were rapid, but they came over and over again; hot fits and cold; 'To be, or not to be?' was the ceaseless question.

He did think she had shown him some kindness. Was that a good reason for injuring her? and his alliance could hardly do less: why be so selfish? It was abominably mean even to think of winning her against her father's will. Had not her father's house been thrown open to him? Had he a doubt about the way in which Mr. Palmer would regard his suit? If a father treats a guest with frank confidence and unsuspecting hospitality, what sort of guest is he that will abuse confidence and requite a host's kindnesses by trying to rob him of that which he most prizes, and who would wound him incurably in his tenderest point? For such breaches of the laws of honour and hospitality Dick had ever entertained the utmost abhorrence. He had never shared in any degree the opinions of the looser sort about heiress-hunting, and all the meannesses attending it. To be sure, with him it was not heiress-hunting—he only wished she were not an heiress; but he would not be the man to bring trouble into a happy house-



hold that had done him nothing but good. He had not much experience of life, but enough to tell him that he was no match, in any respect, for Barbara Palmer. Had not Martel more than once hinted it to him?

‘What business was it of his? meddling coxcomb! I hate him for it.’

He was right, though; nothing but unhappiness could come of seeking her, whether he won her, or not. Considering the terms of unsuspecting friendship on which, as he could not but be conscious, he was received into Palmer’s house, there were but two courses open to him, in honour—his own feelings told him that: one was to stay away, and how could he? the other, to try his luck, and tell Palmer.

But then, Barbara—was he sure of her? Oh! how far from it! ‘I am only sure,’ he would shout, as he walked backwards and forwards through his solitary room, ‘I am only sure that I love her as never man loved woman yet! Oh! heart! heart! heart! what would you have me do? Go rob my friend of his pet lamb; and, with the base betrayal, make myself happy—or my heart will break? Yet this will I not do: how can I? I would rather die outright, as I think I shall, or live in misery for ever. Suppose she should be willing to sacrifice her home, and kindred, and all that belong to her; do I love her so little as to injure her so much—to make a marriage all gain to me, all loss to her? Would I lower her in life? why, I worship her almost with idolatry! I could kiss the print of her foot on the

dirtiest road! it would be clean from her touch. It would be blessedness to me to drink from her shoe, or to kiss the hem of her dress. And would I pull her down and discredit her? O fool! fool! fool! what a worse than fool am I! But can I help it? would I help it, if I could?

Then he would break off into protestations that he would never be raised, like a reckless speculator, into discreditable affluence by the surreptitious acquisition of a wife's fortune—and such a woman! Not he! He would none of it; the very idea degraded his love. Love her he always must and would, but with a generous love, at his own cost, in a way that would not harm her. All he would hope was that he might some day, by some turn of fortune's wheel, be able to make for her some great sacrifice; what he could not exactly imagine, but something that would let her see the consuming fire that he had so manfully concealed.

When, by a train of magnanimous resolves like these, he had worked himself into a very high state of self-respect, he would, from this lofty elevation, take quite another view of his position and duties. How absurd and unpractical these romantic notions! Sentimental rant, fit for romance-reading boys and girls at school!—doing injustice to her and himself; for no one would ever love her as he did, or would so devote himself to her. And all the happiness of both to be wrecked by trumpery fashion!

These were not days to give in to aristocratic assumption and insolent exclusiveness, and old rotten feudal slavery. Democracy is abroad, and is

bringing folk to a level; that is, all educated and well-to-do people:—Of course not artisans and labourers, and cattle of that colour. Anyway, love levelled him and her, and all is fair in love and war. Were they not both of the same flesh and blood, with Adam and Eve for ancestors? Her 'rank and fortune' indeed! What were they, after all, to be such a bar to the perfect happiness of both? As to 'rank,' there was mighty little difference between him and the daughter of a parson, though he was a squire's younger son. He would be just a fool absolute to humour such fancies. Say he was not just her equal: who was? Whoever married her must be her inferior. No one was worthy of her; but who, like himself, could feel her superlative excellence?

Then there was Mr. Palmer, who certainly at one time had been very kind to him, and for a while, at the time of his father's death, had been as a second father to him. It was to be feared he would take the matter very ill. But parsons should not be proud! And if he had been very kind, it was in a patronising sort of way. What right had Palmer to patronise him, Gryffyn? You may be friends with a man, or let it alone, but patronise! Not if I know it. When all was done, the old boy would see it in a better light, and come round, and get reconciled to it, and learn to like it. Why not? Such things happen every day. It is the course of true love, and could in no way be helped. In love, every man for himself. It was positive sin to let the dregs of feudal folly extinguish a passion that