

**GUY MERVYN;
A NOVEL**

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Guy Mervyn; a novel by Brandon Roy

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BRANDON ROY

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A NOVEL**

GUY MERVYN

A Novel

BY

BRANDON ROY

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.

LONDON

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GUY MERVYN.



CHAPTER XXVI.

"WELL," said Lady Elaine, with a long-drawn sigh, "for the most tiresome, foolish, aggravating, insane people in the world, give me a pair of lovers at cross purposes! Muriel, I hope you don't think I mean to be personal?"

Muriel bent low over her work, and made no answer.

"You can do nothing with them," went on Elaine, in a tone of mock indignation. "Consolation is useless; like the mourners

in Rama, they *will not* be comforted! Good advice is quite superfluous; reasoning with them makes them more unreasonable; in fact, they appear to feel with Jud Brownin, when he heard Rubinstein play, that 'it is happier to be miserable, than to be happy without being miserable.'

"Don't, Elaine."

"Don't what?"

"Don't laugh at me. You can't understand these things."

A spasm of pain shot across Elaine's face, but she answered lightly:

"No, thank goodness! I was never in love. But I say nothing against real, honest love-making, except that it is an illusion, the joys of which are fleeting. What I object to is this absurd dilly-dallying—playing hide-and-seek with each other's affection, and making mutual martyrs of one another over a misunderstanding. *You* mope about with

pale cheeks, dark lines under your eyes, and a smile far more watery than tears, and piteous to behold. Cyril Branscome at a moment's notice leaves the Mervyns, who have been such friends to him, and starts off to seek his fortune in the world, simply because he has chanced to meet in the neighbourhood a young woman whom he is supposed to care nothing whatever about. This makes it perfectly plain, to all sane beholders, that you are both so deeply in love that you have reached the *idiotic* stage when lovers revel in making one another wretched; and, like Jud, had 'rather be miserable.' You want shaking—both of you!"

Muriel silently rose, laid down her embroidery, and, crossing over to the couch where Elaine was lying, sat down on a low foot-stool beside her, and hid her face.

"Ellie dear, don't talk to me like this.

It makes it so hard ; and it is hard enough already. You have been laughing at, and running down, everything and everybody all day, so I suppose it is my turn ; but I wish you would choose any other subject rather than this one."

"My dear child," Elaine said, in an altered tone, "I am so sorry ; I am sure I did not mean to pain you. I suppose I am experiencing a little reaction to-day, after Sunday's extreme dissipation ! But, seriously, dear, I do think you were foolish not to let me get some explanation out of Cyril Branscome through Guy ; nothing could have been easier."

"No, no!" cried Muriel, shuddering. "He would have thought I was seeking to win him back. Ellie, my one comfort in all this is that I know I have never in any way deserved to forfeit his respect. Besides, the only explanation possible is that he ceased

to care for me when he found things did not all run smooth ; and certainly, the other day he took pains to make me feel that now he dislikes the very remembrance of our friendship in past years."

Elaine stroked the soft brown hair gently, as she said :

" If you are so sure that is so, dear, why not give him up and forget him ? He is not a worthy object for the one love of a woman's life. Why cannot you cease loving him ?"

Muriel raised her head, and in her brown eyes shone a sudden light, as she answered impetuously :

" Elaine, why cannot you cease breathing ? Because breath is life to you. Well, loving Cyril is life to me, and can only cease with life."

Then she hid her face again, and burst into tears.

" What a fool the man is," thought Elaine,

impatiently. "Come what will, at the next opportunity, I will speak to Guy."

"How selfish I am, Ellie!" said Muriel presently, looking up with a sad little smile, and very wet lashes; "I am always bothering you with my troubles; and to-day particularly, when you are not well, I should have cheered you up, instead of being so silly."

"Never mind, dear; it does me good to learn that there is such a thing in this heartless world as constancy in love. Muriel, do you think men ever love like this?"

Muriel had risen, and with her hands clasped above her head stood for some time looking out of the window; then answered slowly:

"I believe some do, Elaine; at least, they do in books."

"Yes, but you and I are not 'in books.' Do any of the men we know?"