

The Buccaneer's Daughter

**THE
BUCCANEER'S
DAUGHTER**
by
DEL GARRETT

Chapter 1
A Thief in the Night

I looked deep into the dark brown eyes of the man who stood before me holding a pistol in his hand. His eyes were more threatening than the pistol, for they stared deeply into my soul.

I found myself growing weaker as he watched me—hungrily, I might add, like a fox with a

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trapped hen, knowing it had its prey and had all the time in the world to enjoy the kill.

“Is this what you want?” I asked, holding out my heart-shaped locket.

“Aye, that and more.” He smiled. His thin golden-colored mustache curled upwards at the corners of his mouth. The deep tan of his skin and dark vermilion of his lips gave contrast to the row of perfectly white teeth, which gleamed even in my darkened chamber as he grinned at me...as if there had been a joke made and only this handsome stranger knew its punchline.

“Surely you would take only that which a lady might offer, and nothing more.”

“Surely I would take whatever the lady has to offer; *everything* the lady has to offer.” His grin widened.

“I beg of you, sir; please leave me my dignity.”

Outside the window I could hear the approaching sound of boots upon cobblestone. My wild-eyed thief also heard the soldiers approaching.

“M’lady, it seems that I have much less time than I had hoped to enjoy your company.”

He held up the necklace and smiled at the locket which he had opened and which he now kissed and closed, draping the chain over his head to hang around his own neck.

“I leave you now to wonder what the night might have held for the two of us.”

With that, he brushed his lips across mine, then leaped to the windowsill and swung himself

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outward, landing in the flower garden two floors below. He landed quietly. The soft dirt in the flowerbed not only cushioned his fall, it quieted the sound his boots might have made on hard dirt.

As he crouched there, two of the Redcoats hurried by looking for him. I looked down from the window. He looked up and saw me watching him. For a moment his face showed concern that I might alert the soldiers. From the other side of the hedge a rough-looking officer with a saber in his hand looked up at me and shouted, "Miss, have you seen him?"

The thief squatted in the flowerbed, hidden from view except from my perch in the window. I looked at him briefly then stared at the officer and pointed in the direction the two previous soldiers had taken.

"He went that way," I lied, forcing a tremor of feigned fear in my voice.

"Thank ye, ma'am," the officer said and ushered his men onward in the direction I had pointed.

I looked again at the thief. He stood, smiled at me, doffed his high-plumed hat and made a grandiose bow. Replacing the hat on his head, he blew me a quick kiss and winked conspiratorially at me. He ducked through the thick hedge and made his way across the courtyard to the far wall. Climbing it as though he were a monkey boy, he reached the top, took one last look in my direction and was gone in the night.

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“Oh, my!” I felt weak enough to drop. I made my way to my bed and sat down upon it just as Aunt Eller opened the door and rushed to me.

“Oh, my poor baby. Did he hurt you?”

“N—no, not really. All he did was take my necklace.”

“Thank heaven that’s all he had time to take.”

“Aunt Eller!”

“Shush, child. You are no longer a little girl. Your body has developed enough for any man to want you as a lover. You must be careful how you act in front of men from now on. It is said this very same thief took more than a mere necklace from Lady Covington when he visited her in the night last week.”

I giggled.

“But I never saw him before tonight. I’d never flirted with the man. And, as to Lady Covington, I never heard...”

“Nor has Lord Covington, I assure you. But gossip flows from the servants like water from a spigot. She’s a lady and out of respect for her the word will never be widespread, I assure you. But Lord Covington is so much older than she and this thief has gained quite a reputation with the ladies that I am sure Lord Covington is wondering what has put such a smile on his ladyship’s face.”

Just then there came a rapping upon my door and George, the manservant, stuck his head in.

“Lieutenant Carstairs, mum. He wishes to...”

The lieutenant pushed his way past the manservant and entered my room. He was the same officer that I had spoken to from my

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window. He addressed me in a cautious manner, taking time to form his words carefully and precisely. "I need to know, Lady Esther, if you are absolutely certain of which direction you pointed as to where the thief had escaped."

He stood there with a look of frustration on his face; his hands propped on his hips, his feet spread wide apart, his bushy eyebrows lowered and a deep flush covered his cheeks. His nostrils flared widely and wildly as he waited for an answer.

"Oh, sir. I am not sure, now. I approached the window to look for the thief and I heard someone running off in the direction I indicated. I thought it was him."

Clearly the lieutenant didn't believe me. He snorted loudly, wiped a hand down his face and looked away. It was one thing to question a lady of royal blood, quite another to challenge her openly without proof.

"Thank ye, miss. Sorry to have troubled ye again."

Lieutenant Carstairs bowed politely, turned and stormed out of my chambers. A moment later I heard him grumbling beneath my window.

I moved across the room while Aunt Eller chatted incessantly about the condition of living in a coastal town with so many thieves and killers about.

Looking out my window, I saw that one of the lieutenant's men had stepped through the hedgerow and was holding a lantern high above his head as he pointed out where the thief had landed and made his way through the hedge.

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He and the lieutenant, followed by four soldiers with rifles, traced the thief's path from the house across the yard and to the point where he had disappeared over the wall.

I drew back from the window as the lieutenant looked back in my direction. Afraid of what he might say to Father, or to the magistrate, I resolved myself to act as frightened as the situation demanded.

I knew Father would be concerned only for my safety...and of course, my virginity...and that he would care less about the necklace. After all, he had purloined it himself from the neck of some other lady on one of his boardings of a French ship.

It was ballyhooed loudly around the celebration that followed that trip that the necklace was the last thing Father had taken from off the lady's body just before he took her greatest treasure. I had asked him what the men had meant by that, but he never told me.

"There are matters you will learn about as you grow older, my princess." What I did know was that we were buccaneers and to us such trinkets were spoils for the taking. In that sense, we had more in common with the night's thief than we did with the king's soldiers.

At the same time, we were tied to the throne by blood. Father was first cousin to the king, not part of the family that was in the king's favor, I'm afraid. We were somewhat outcasts through a dalliance Father had made early in life with a lady to whom the king, then a prince, had been

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courting. When the prince discovered one night that Father had 'plucked' the rose in the garden before the prince had been able to sample its fragrance for himself, a lifelong hatred began which still held to this day.

The result, even though Father was titled, was a denouncing by the prince when he became king. Father would not share in the fortunes of the realm so he had taken to the trade of robbing the Spanish and French ships of their treasures; taking their livestock, butchering it and cooking it right there on the docks, selling the meat to anyone, including the unknowing ship crews whence the stock had originally been claimed.

It was a wonderful life and Father became rich, but he never took me along on any of his journeys until I had reached my teen years. Had I been born a boy, I would have shared in his adventures much sooner, I am sure.

Nevertheless, I loved my life. Up until now, it had been filled with simple merriment with teas and gardening and watching Punch and Judy shows in the park.

I must admit that after tonight, though, my life would take on new meaning. It must, for the young thief had stolen more than just my necklace.

He had stolen a little girl's innocence—mentally, if not physically—and at seventeen, had opened my eyes to a new awakening. He was a beautiful man, a dangerous man, and a man of considerable experience with the ladies, according to Aunt Eller.

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Would I ever see him again? I hoped so. For even with the danger he presented, there was something so charming about him that made my heart flutter each time I remembered those piercing dark eyes burning their way into my very soul.

I had thought about boys before, of course, but now I was thinking about being with a man. What would it be like to make love to him? I liked what I saw and had we been blessed with more time, I'm sure I would have willingly submitted myself to him.

I slept a fitful sleep, tossing among my bed sheets. I dreamed of the thief climbing through my window, bending low over my bed and warming my neck with his hot breath.

In my dream, I opened my eyes to see him smiling at me. He bent his head low over me and I felt the warmth of his lips on mine, felt the wetness of his tongue as he probed deeply past my lips and into my mouth, stabbing my own tongue with his.

I felt his hands on my shoulders holding me down, lowering themselves to my breasts, pulling the gown away to expose my nipples to the cool night air.

The sensation of them growing as he tweaked first one then the other, then the lowering of his head as he licked each nipple, causing them to grow even larger, then taking them into his mouth one at a time and pulling on them with his teeth. Gently, like the fox nuzzling at the hen, he took

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his time to sample the blood that boiled within my veins, controlling me with his lovemaking. I couldn't help myself. I moaned loudly and curled my legs upward into a fetal position, digging both my hands between my legs and pressing deeply in that moist place where I so ached for his touch.

Then it was over. The dream faded and along with it his face, his hands on my body, his warm body pressing against me, his hot breath on my neck. Everything, all gone.

The night closed in around me in total darkness. I awoke to sunlight coming through the window and to sheets moist with perspiration and a more concentrated pool of moisture in the center of the bed.

I first blushed my shame, then my delight that I had been made love to, even if only in my dream, for it meant what Aunt Eller had warned me about. I had become a woman.

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A previously 1st Place winner at the White County Creative Writers conference.

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