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# LUX TOILET SOAP

## A SUITOR TOO MANY MILDRED BARBOUR

Very haughtily, she turned him out, not realizing what consequences would follow that imperious action.

### CHAPTER 41

#### PLAYING WITH FIRE

That afternoon Farquahar came to the Ware home and was admitted by Siddons, who announced him to Lila. She was waiting, tremulously up-stairs and descended at once to the small drawing-room adjoining the larger salon.

Jack had no idea that the "Mrs. Herbert Ware" for whom he asked so punctiliously was the girl who came to greet him.

Lila played her role well. She had arranged that the tea-service should be placed in the room, ready for a match under the spirit-lamp; she waited until Siddons was well out of sight, and then, somewhere between her own room and the downstairs hall, she adjusted a smart little hat and clasped a silver fox scarf around the shoulders of her plain little street frock. She wanted to give the appearance of being a visitor in the house.

"Your friend, Mrs. Ware, is a brick to let us have this time together!" declared Jack, as he took her hands in his and drew her to the soft behind the tea-table.

In his delight at this evidence of Lila's desire to see him alone, he forgot his grievance of the previous day, as far as she was concerned. He couldn't forgive Holmes, however, and Lila was infinitely relieved when he said that the proposed dinner-party for Wednesday night was off.

"I didn't trust Holmes," he said grimly. "He'd try to take you from me, even now. You know I'm abominably jealous, sweetheart."

Lila nodded: "Yes, I know," she sighed.

When he tried to take her in his arms, she said:

"No, Jack. This isn't a rendezvous for lovers. My friends lets me receive you here, because she appreciates the ghastly situation we are in. But she knows I am—er—engaged to another man, and she would feel that I had outraged her hospitality, if I permitted you to kiss me while I am still—still bound to him."

Farquahar was inclined to protest—violently.

"Very well," said Lila calmly. "Then the arrangement is off. We will not meet here again."

In the end he had to yield, or forego the pleasure of a tête-à-tête with Lila in pleasant surroundings.

"I dare say I can, at least, kiss your hand without damaging the properties, or offending the old dragon upstairs," he muttered sulkily.

"My hand—yes," agreed Lila, tendering her scented finger-tips.

She smiled inwardly at his term "old dragon."

"What is she like—this Mrs. Ware?" he asked, after his third visit.

"Would you like to see her?" queried Lila mischievously.

"Good Heavens, no!" he declared hastily.

Lila went on delightedly:

"Don't you think we really ought to ask her to have tea with us sometime? She'd like so much to see you."

"Well, I don't want to see her," said Farquahar decidedly. "You're all I want in the world, and I have a terrible time trying to snatch a few minutes alone with you, as it is, without having some antique dowager horning in."

"How do you know she's old?" Lila was enjoying herself.

He shrugged.

"I don't know. Something about the atmosphere of this house, I guess. It has such a sedate air. It looks as if everything had been put here according to some pattern—as if the slightest deviation from that pattern would cause a spiritual earthquake. You find that slavish adherence to convention only in old people."

Lila winced. In a way, he had sketched Herbert and their life together. And yet, in her loving eyes, Herbert represented perfection. It made her thoughtful.

Farquahar continued to come almost every afternoon at the same hour. What Siddons thought, Lila couldn't imagine, but somehow she felt uneasy. Once she thought she saw him lurking in the shadows of the hall when she paused before the mirror to adjust the stage proper-

ties—the hat and wrap that gave her the air of a casual visitor to the house.

Her first fear that Uncle Dan, who still lingered on as a guest and gave no sign of the scheme by which he was to help Lila out of the mess into which he had precipitated her, proved groundless. Uncle Dan discreetly disappeared every afternoon, directly after luncheon, and did not return until dinner. He said something about playing pool somewhere.

And Herbert never came home during the afternoon. Since the night he had pricked the bubble of Lila's subterfuge concerning the "charity donation," he never even telephoned during the day. The breach had never been healed. He treated Lila with cool, aloof courtesy and avoided being alone with her. It nearly broke Lila's heart.

What with that and the strain of putting off Jack Farquahar, she believed she was well on the way to losing her mind. There was only Dorothy to sustain her. Dorothy, cool, sweet, resourceful.

"Tell me what this Mrs. Ware is like?" Farquahar startled Lila by asking one day. "Is there any old man?"

"Oh, no, no!" declared Lila hastily. "She—er—she's not at all that sort. She's a sweet old dear who wants to make people happy, but she wouldn't for the world mix into anybody's affairs."

"I think I would like to meet her, after all," he insisted doggedly. Lila berated herself for that moment of mischief when she had even suggested such a thing.

"She—she rarely comes downstairs," said Lila hastily. "She's a—sort of invalid."

"Well, she must see people occasionally," Farquahar argued. "Don't you think, as a special favor, she might let us go up to see her. I'd like awfully to know her."

"Some day, perhaps," said Lila feverishly, and was devoutly thankful that Farquahar let the subject rest there.

"How is your father?" he demanded suddenly.

"Quite well, thank you," answered Lila mechanically, her thoughts



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on the problem of how to keep Jack from seeing "Mrs. Ware," should he renew his demand. His exclamation of astonishment brought her to her senses. "I—I mean—he's j—just about the same," she stammered. Farquahar's dark brows were drawn into a straight black line. "Lila, are you lying to me? Is your father really ill?" She drew herself up haughtily. "I am not accustomed to being spoken to like this. How dare you? Please go now." Very haughtily, she turned him out, not realizing what consequences would follow. (To Be Continued.)

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