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Her Chance to Vamp.

By Harry Bangs

Being too young to attend any affairs but those given at the church and afternoon parties given by her sisters in affliction—the girls of the second year in high school—Theresa decided that she was one of the most misunderstood beings extant. She was sixteen years old—in years perhaps—but! Why, hadn't she been an inveterate reader of the snappiest stories on the market? Didn't she know how to "vamp" even though the material was never very worth while? No chaps except high school boys ever paid any attention to her unless it was some suitor of her sister Alicia's and then it was only to tease her. This was the rankling element in Theresa's life. How she longed to have a college man for a beau!

Curled upon her own particular divan, with a copy of Robert W. Chambers' latest novel on her lap, she turned her eyes to the window and gazed mournfully at the gray sky—the leafless, dripping trees that lined the quiet, sedate street upon which Theresa's home stood. How like her life the outlook was—always the same gray monotony. Oh, for color and life—oh! oh! Her heart gave a jump and lost at least two beats, for a bright red roadster was stopping before their house and in it was a single male occupant.

With one bound Theresa had leaped to her dressing table—and was applying powder to her diminutive nose. In another breath-taking instant she had coiled her hair, which usually hung tied with a ribbon to her waist, and was viciously digging hair pins into her scalp while her coiffure assumed resplendent proportions, indigenous to Gainsborough and Anna Held.

"Probably some one to see Alicia," raced her thoughts, "but thank goodness she's away. I have a real chance at last."

Down the stairs she tore, almost knocking over Emily, the maid, who was making the ascent to announce the visitor.

"Who is it?" Theresa painted.

Emily regarded the flushed eager face with amusement. "Here's his card, Theresa, darlin'," she answered.

"Mr. Richard Bolton," she read.

"I'll see Mr. Bolton, Emily," she announced, "and please in the future, try to remember that I am Miss Theresa."

The maid acknowledged this reprimand with stifled sounds which sounded like ill-suppressed mirth.

Theresa, hearing the choking sounds threw her head high and descended in a stately way, her cheeks flaming with indignation. Would she ever be treated as a grown-up?

In the drawing room she found the stranger. His back was turned and she silently surveyed his head, his shoulders, his bearing. Here was a man of the world. That much was evident at a glance.

"This must seem like an intrusion," he said, as he turned and made a step toward her.

Theresa extended her hand and displayed an irresistible dimple. "No indeed, Mr. Bolton. It is a great pleasure. I'm only sorry that Alicia is not home. She is out of town."

"Then you are her little sister, Theresa?" he asked.

Woe of woes—must she always be known as Alicia's "little sister." An inspiration born of her suffering came to her.

"No indeed," glibly, "I'm their cousin Molly Pearson. I'm just down from college for a few days' visit."

A slight semblance of a smile appeared at the corners of Mr. Bolton's mouth but he gravely acknowledged her introduction.

"I'm very delighted to know you, Miss Pearson."

"Won't you sit down," said Theresa

in her most worldly tone. "Are you in town for long?"

"No, you see the fact is—I'm here only to deliver an invitation. I drove over from the university for this reason."

"Oh indeed," said Theresa still with her worldly tone. "Was the invitation for Alicia?"

"No, it was for her sister Theresa."

"Oh-h-h!" this was a very expressive monosyllable. A world of meaning was imparted. It might have been interpreted literally, as "why didn't you tell me this in the first place?"

"Well, what a shame," Theresa said recovering her composure again. "Theresa isn't home either, but"—with anxious assurance, "you can leave the message with me."

"I wish I could, but you see it's of a very confidential nature and I"—a malicious twinkle was now becoming evident in Dick Bolton's eyes. "I really don't see how I can leave it with you."

"But—but you really must. I'll see that Theresa gets it. She's—she is not expected home for dinner. Really don't you think you had better leave the message with me?" Blue eyes were raised to his, and an air of tragic concern was slowly enveloping her.

But Bolton was to prove himself heartless.

"Then I'm afraid it will be too late to deliver the message at all," this took on the nature of a wail and with it, Theresa's last remnant of social poise disappeared. "Oh, please tell me," she begged. "You don't understand, I mean—you see—" her breath was beginning to come in little gasps and the tears were gathering for a torrent.

"Well, you see I wanted to ask her

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