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TWENTY YEARS MARRIED.

Yes, twenty years married. Since that mysterious word I spoke, when on a beautiful summer night, I first assumed the flowery yoke, I long had craved the bliss of matrimony. And cheerfully subscribed the vow: Perhaps I do the same again. Perhaps—though I am older now.

Oh, well! I recall the time when she, now positive by my side, stood in her blushing morning pride. A tender, sweet and laughing bride. And I, so proud of that dear hand, could scarce contain myself for bliss: I'd bought a tract of fairy land for her, and sealed my purchase with a kiss. For happiness we trimmed our sails, my darling little bride and I; Hope's breeze blew a pleasant gale, And gently smelt the summer air. The world seemed made for her and me, All bright wherever we might turn, Our life to be a tranquil sea— Sweet innocence! we'd much to learn.

THE WIFE'S TRIAL.

By MARGARET VERNE.

"My friend Madeline Carter is coming to visit us, Alice."

Mrs. Lund looked wonderingly into her husband's face, as he spoke. The name of his friend was a strange one to her. She had never heard him mention it before.

"Madeline Carter—pray who may she be?" she asked. "And when is she coming?" she added, glancing quickly around the little breakfast-room.

Mr. Lund smiled and tossed a gay, dashing-looking tie into his wife's lap.

"Read for yourself, if you please," he said, "and then tell me how you like it."

With a puzzled expression upon her pleasant face, Mrs. Lund read, what perhaps pleased her, and what perhaps did not, for she had a strong control over her features, and did not allow them to betray her secrets. At any rate, when she finished reading she drew her white forehead laughingly across the commencement of the letter, which was, "My dear Arthur Lund," and said:

"Ought I to like that, dear! A strange woman using that 'possessive my,' as we used to say at school, in connection with your name?"

Mr. Lund shook his head. "Do you like the penmanship?" he queried.

"It is very beautiful," she answered, evasively.

"But that is not it—do you like it?" he persisted in saying.

"Yes, well enough. But you know I am seldom drawn very strongly towards gay, handsome people."

"But how do you know that she is gay and handsome?"

"The penmanship indicates as much."

"You are right, Alice, and Arthur knows it. If I were in your place, I wouldn't have her come here at all."

The voice came from a low window-seat near by.

"What! is Hester here as early as this in the morning?" said Mr. Lund, evidently somewhat annoyed. "So much come from settling down within a stone's throw of one's old home. Now, chatter-box, what have you to say to Miss Carter?"

"That if I were in Alice's place, I wouldn't care to have her here—nothing more or less."

"And why not?" queried her brother. Hester looked annoyed. She did not know whether it would do for her to speak her mind or not. Shaking her head, she said, archly:

"You wouldn't like to have me tell why, Arthur Lund?"

"Nonsense! How thankful I am that I didn't choose such a little goosey as you for a wife. Alice will have a pleasant visit with Miss Carter, I am sure, in spite of your mischievous croaking. Don't mind her, Alice."

Alice stood looking alternately at her husband and young sister-in-law, striving to comprehend the meaning of the words. There was a perplexed expression about her well-formed mouth, and in her clear brown eyes. Whatever her thoughts were, she kept them to herself, for she remarked, at a moment's pause, in an indifferent, careless manner:

"She will be here Wednesday—to-morrow. I will have everything in readiness for her. Never fear, Arthur."

Her husband bent down and kissed her, as she spoke. She returned the caress mechanically, and let her eyes wander searchingly over his face.

"Never mind Hester, Alice. Miss Carter is a very agreeable young lady," Mr. Lund said, as he turned away.

This was all of the morning's conversation, and yet, upon the young wife's heart a shadow had fallen. Going to the window, she watched her husband as he walked down the garden-path to the street. The June sunshine glimmered through the trees upon him. The birds were singing from every bush and shrub.

On either hand the sweet-mouthed flowers

led towards him as if for caresses. This was what Alice's eyes took in; to her heart there was no deeper meaning, perhaps. She was restless and uneasy. After a while she glanced back towards the breakfast-table, still untouched. Near it, in a heavily cushioned chair, her sister-in-law Hester sat reading. For a moment, as she looked upon her, an unworthy question framed itself upon her lips. But she did not ask it. She had little need to, in fact, for Hester, anticipating her, closed her book and joined her at the window.

"Don't feel badly about it, Alice," she began. "I'm sure Arthur never cared at all for Madeline—at least, not half as much as he does for you. But at one time they were very intimate, and mother and I were afraid he would marry her. But that was a long time ago!"

Alice smiled.

"Is she beautiful—fascinating—did you say?" she asked.

"Yes, after a fashion. She has splendid eyes; such as will draw one this way and that. She sings well, too, and has a queenly way of doing everything. But she isn't half as sweet as you are, dear."

In this assurance there was something inexpressibly touching to the young wife; at least, her peculiar mood made it so. There was a little fluttering in her throat for a moment, and then her eyes were suddenly dimmed. But she did not speak, only rested her fair hands on the head of her sister, and tried to look down the shaded way that led from the wide, deep window.

"What a pleasant, happy home this was (so she thought)! How blessed had she been about all other women!"

In the perfect arms of memory she was carried back into the past. All the struggles, trials and temptations of her life arose up before her. They were not few, for with her own hands she had made herself a place in the busy world. Not few, I say, but at the early age of twenty-three she had conquered life. By this I mean that she knew it as woman twice her years seldom do. No matter how. Perhaps it was through her own heart. Love is a great purifier sometimes, and comes like a rapid fire to clear away the rubbish from our eyes. Blessed is he who can read and interpret what he sees! So Alice loved and learned. Standing there, she thought of it. The birth of her love had given her great pain. When she had looked at it steadily and well, her heart was brimmed with joy. We ought to thank God every day, we who love, for the sweet privilege of loving. Its return is the gift of another—itself power.

Why, with all her experience, the thought of Madeline Carter should jar so strongly upon her, she did not know. Her husband's friend, she was prepared to welcome her—as her own, she was afraid from her present feelings she never could. That was the dark side of it. Having naturally a sunny heart she soon found the brighter one; and in an hour's time to think of Madeline Carter, as she was, her pleasant home, one would have said that the evil spirit was wilyly exercised away.

It was one of the pleasantest of June evenings that Madeline Carter came. With her husband, Alice was waiting upon the portico to receive her, when the carriage drove to the door. She had expected to meet a handsome woman, but for so much beauty she was not prepared. For a moment she started back as one will when a sudden light breaks upon them.

"I am happy to welcome you, Madeline," Mr. Lund said, shaking her hand cordially, and then turning to his wife, he presented her.

Madeline's proud eyes flashed widely open upon her. At a glance she seemed to take in her whole character. How much a single look will express. The one that passed between Alice and Madeline was fraught with meaning. It said, "I shall hate you!" From Madeline's eyes it was like a swift, strong blaze; from Alice's like the piercing gleam of a star—sharp and lance-like. This was their meeting, although the while they clasped their white hands together and the woman entered Alice went to the kitchen, Madeline congratulated Mr. Lund upon his happiness, his home, his wife. She did this with a touch of tenderness in her clear, skillfully managed voice.

"I always knew, Arthur," she said, in her old, familiar way, "that sometime you would be bested by just this way for life. Isn't it delightful?"

"Very," Mr. Lund answered, smiling. "I used to prophesy, too, if I remember rightly," he added, a little archly.

"But you were a false prophet. I knew you were then."

"Yes—under circumstances entirely justified by my conclusions. You'll admit that, I'm sure."

"Not even that."

Mr. Lund smiled again. He was used to her evasive answers. They seemed to please him. From her manner he was led to watch her closely. How beautiful she was! As he thought that, the little tender breeze swept up from the fragrant paths of the past. It was so pleasant that he deemed it harmless. So he turned his face towards it. It grew stronger then, and swept through his heart even. Ah, Mr. Lund, what a dangerous delicious pleasure was that!

Madeline Carter came for a visit of a few days, but they lengthened out into weeks, and still she did not speak of going. At dinner, one day, she said, turning her face towards Mr. Lund, while she fixed her eyes upon Alice:

"I have a friend in the city, or rather an acquaintance, who wishes much to call here. He once knew Mrs. Lund he tells me."

"Ah, and who may your friend be?" was the answer.

"Mr. Ralph Morrison. He is here from Penn on business. Some people call him very attractive. What is your opinion, Mrs. Lund?"

At that moment Arthur raised his eyes to Alice's face. It was so white that it startled him.

"Are you ill?" he asked, rising quickly from his chair.

"No, no—pray be seated," she answered, glancing deprecatingly into his face. "I was a little dizzy—it has quite gone now."

Madeline had watched her closely meanwhile. There was a satisfied, knowing look about her mouth and in her eyes. A poor reader of human faces would have known that there was a certain triumph at her heart.

"I hope the thought of seeing Ralph Morrison does not affect you so, Mrs. Lund," she said, gaily. "I shall feel obliged to warn Arthur of him."

Alice's face crimsoned, and for a moment she did not answer. Even Arthur seemed a little disturbed at her strange ap-

pearance, for he raised his eyes to her

face, as though anxiously awaiting her reply.

"I would advise you to do so, Miss Carter. Perhaps he will appoint you to watch me closely when the gentleman calls," Alice said, at last, laughingly.

"Perhaps so," Madeline answered, opening her eyes to their full width.

"I hate you!" was the look that passed between them; then, fierce, deep and strong. Mr. Lund felt it. The swift current touched and thrilled him, but he was like one standing in the dark.

In the evening following, Ralph Morrison called. He was a dark, handsome man, with a smooth tongue and a soft voice. Mr. Lund did not like him, and so gathered his dignity about him like an icy garment. Alice was very quiet, and a little paler than usual, but Madeline was all grace and beauty. Her eyes shone like stars. They were so bright that what was lying in their depths could not be seen. Before he left, Mr. Morrison spoke a few low words to Alice, and as he did so, Madeline scanned the face of Mr. Lund closely.

"They were friends once," she said, seeing how indifferent he was.

He glanced towards them quickly at this, and then looked inquiringly into her face. Her words were simple enough, but they were weighed upon with meaning. As if annoyed, she dropped her eyes, and playing with her bracelet, remarked, in a confused, half-troubled way:

"Excuse me—I supposed you knew all about their acquaintance, and yet I might have known—never mind. See! Mr. Morrison is bidding Mrs. Lund good night."

He was, indeed! But why should Alice stand blushing before him? Arthur Lund was startled out of his composure for a moment. He turned to Madeline. She had risen from her chair, and stood with her beautiful head bent thoughtfully forward.

"I am quite puzzled," he said, in a low tone. "I must hear more of this," he added, quite forgetting himself.

This was but the beginning of disquiet. With Arthur Lund it increased daily. Between Alice and himself a strange coldness sprang up, but Madeline was careful to him. I do not say that he was conscious of this, but doubting his wife, he made her his friend.

It was so like old times to see her, he thought, as he looked at her. So like the pleasant days of his youth it seemed to lister his sweet, musical voice. Sometimes he used to wish that she could not read him quite so easily; that she did not know quite so well of the little trouble between Alice and himself. But after a while he thought of it no more, and Alice went further from him. How would it end? As the beautiful enchantment willed perhaps. But the good angels of earth are many. They watch as well as the bad.

Madeline told Arthur that Mr. Morrison and Alice had been lovers once. She said this in an artless, innocent way, as though she did not comprehend what she was saying. But she drank in every word eagerly.

"Why did they not marry?"

"There had been a misunderstanding between them—they had not quite comprehended each other," was the answer.

"And now?"

"O you could see how it was now, of course. People could always see when it was to late to remedy an evil."

"Yes, yes—but had they loved deeply?"

"Yes."

The word came with a sigh. At that moment it fell lovingly upon her ears. Madeline had loved him deeply, perhaps, he thought. Involuntarily he raised her hand to his lips.

Ah, Arthur—Arthur Lund! could you have seen the white face bent towards you as she said that, could you have seen the terrible look of agony that passed over it, you might have stayed your feet from the path which they were treading. The beautiful hand would have scorched your lips like fire!

Soberly, Alice stole up to her white doorway to her chamber. In the darkness she fell upon her knees, clasping her hands across her forehead. Her prayer was:

"Be merciful—merciful, dear God!"

"It is so cruel, so miserably cruel!"

So Hester Lund kept saying to herself, as she sat by Alice's bedside during the night. But Alice did not speak at all, only mutely with her large brown eyes. She kept her white face hidden in the pillow, and muffled the heavy sobs that broke so constantly upon her lips. At first Arthur came to see her, but he never suggested to him one day, as she was sitting in her wife's chamber, with a troubled expression upon his face, his mouth stern and his brows knit, that it would be better for him to allow Alice a few days of uninterrupted quiet. He looked at her keenly as she spoke, and his fine lips curled into a smile.

"Then I am a trouble to Alice?" he said, in a low tone, scarcely above a whisper.

"I did not say that you were. But some things trouble her. I am sure of that," was the quick answer.

"I do not doubt there is. I have ample proof."

"And so have I!" retorted Hester, under her breath, turning away.

This conversation was in the upper hall. At the door of her chamber, which was slightly ajar, Madeline Carter listened to it! Her beautiful face gleamed in its triumphant joy.

"We will see—we will see, Alice Lund, who conquers!" she said, clasping her hands together, and bending her regal head upon them. "To fall is to die, and I will quick-eyed Hester! I must keep this sharp lookout."

When Madeline went down to dinner that day she wore her sweetest smiles.

"How was Mrs. Lund?" she asked of Hester.

"Very well," was the cool reply, given with a corresponding glance.

"What had she been thought of much for?"

"That had not been thought of much for."

"She (Madeline) would have visited her, but she feared that she might disturb her."

"She most certainly would," was the prompt, decisive answer.

Arthur Lund raised his eyes in surprise. Hester looked him firmly in the face. Madeline watched them smilingly. "I must see to that Hester," she thought to herself.

What! that would have been well, Miss Madeline.

At the expiration of a week, Alice insisted upon going down stairs. Hester

protested that she was too weak, and

even Arthur expressed a fear that she might endanger her health by so doing.

But she was firm in her resolution, and so at tea-time that day she took her place at the table again. She was looking poorly. None felt this more keenly than did Hester, and in consequence she hated Madeline Carter most deeply. How the little play would end she did not know, but she thought to herself that in it she would not be an idle character—that she would help the plot to a speedy denouement, if possible.

How strange it was that Ralph Morrison, who had absented himself from the house during Alice's illness, should make his appearance on the first evening which she spent down stairs. To Arthur Lund it was inexplicable. To all appearances, it was the same to Madeline. But Hester was content to watch without wondering.

Alice was lying upon the sofa when Mr. Morrison was announced. Her hand was near enough to her to see the faint color arise in her cheeks at the mention of his name. With a quick, hurried glance about him, Mr. Morrison bent over Alice and whispered a few words. When he turned away, Hester went at once to her.

"Tell me what he said, Alice dear," she began, taking her hand.

"That he was happy to see me in the parlor again," she answered, raising her eyes wistfully to Hester's face.

"And was that all?"

"All?" (still wondering.)

"That is well. Sometime you shall know why I asked you."

Madeline clenched her white hands together, and her breath came close at Hester Lund. For what, she knew not. The girl's face was unreadable as a sealed book. There was nothing to be gathered from that. Perhaps her step was a little firmer, her head, always finely carried, more confident pose, as she turned from Alice to her seat again. There was something, at any rate, that jarred with Madeline's thoughts. All around it was an unpleasant evity. But Mr. Morrison was never more witty or entertaining. To Hester it seemed dull, and she knew that it was the same to Alice. She turned aside from Alice he cared little for the company. His eyes constantly sought her face. His head was bent towards her as he sat. Once in a while, as though conscious of betraying too deep

interest, he would turn his face to Madeline. He would not look at her for many moments only, and then to Alice again.

When he turned to leave the room that night, he drew his kerchief from his coat pocket, and as he did so, a delicate little drop of dew fell upon his cheek, as if from Alice to her seat again. There was something, at any rate, that jarred with Madeline's thoughts. All around it was an unpleasant evity. But Mr. Morrison was never more witty or entertaining. To Hester it seemed dull, and she knew that it was the same to Alice. She turned aside from Alice he cared little for the company. His eyes constantly sought her face. His head was bent towards her as he sat. Once in a while, as though conscious of betraying too deep

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A MARVELOUS SUNSET.

A PHANTOM MOUNTAIN AND FOUR RAINBOWS.

"The heavens declared the glory of God, and the firmament showed His handiwork" in the sunset glories of Saturday evening last. Such a sight is rarely had here, and never elsewhere. Those who have been here season after season for pleasure and sight-seeing, admit that they never saw anything to equal it before, and Mr. Aiken, of the Mount Washington railroad, who has been here at all seasons of the year for ten or twelve years, and Mr. Murphy, of the signal station, who has been here in the summer's calm and the winter's storm, concede that the scene on Saturday evening to be the finest and most wondrously magnificent that they had ever seen.

Just before the hour for its setting, the sun was entirely obscured by a heavy cloud, which deluged the mountain top with a driving shower of rain, but the cloud lifted instantly, just at the moment of setting, and the sun bathed the mountain top in a golden glow, softened and shaded by the reflection of the dark clouds which hung about the horizon over against the summit of the mountains: So sharply and clearly were the rays of the sun thrown upon the mountain, through a rift in the clouds, that the blades of grass in what is known as "Bigelow's Lawn," at the head of Tuckerman's ravine, could be almost counted from the mountain top, more than a thousand feet above them. Instantly, and as if by magic, the most brilliant rainbow ever seen commenced forming, one end of its golden and crimson showers resting in Tuckerman's ravine and the other directly over the Glen House. A complete arch soon formed, high in the heavens, so soft and sharp as to represent two-thirds or three-four