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#### CHAPTER VIII.

##### A Mixed Pickle.

Mrs. Whitcomb had almost blushed when she had murmured to Lieutenant Hudson:

"I should think the young couple would have preferred a stateroom."

And Mr. Hudson had flinched a little as he explained:

"Yes, of course. We tried to get it, but it was gone."

It was during the excitement over the decoration of the bridal section, that the stateroom-tenants slipped in unobserved.

First came a fluttering woman whose youthful beauty had a certain hue of experience, saddening and wiser.

The porter brought her in from the station-platform, led her to the stateroom's concave door and passed in with her luggage.

But she lingered without, a Peri at the gate of Paradise. When the porter returned to bow her in, she shivered and hesitated, and then demurred:

"Oh, porter, are you sure there's nobody else in there?"

The porter chuckled, but humored her panic.

"I ain't seen nobody. Shall I look under the seat?"

To his dismay, she nodded her head violently. He rolled his eyes in wonderment, but returned to the stateroom, made a pretense of examination, and came back with a face full of reassurance.

"No'm, they's nobody there. Take a mighty small-size burglar to squeeze unda that bald—er—berth. No'm, nobody there."

"Oh!"

The gasp was so equivocal that he made bold to ask:

"Is you pleased or disappointed?"

The mysterious young woman was too much agitated to rebuke the impudence. She merely sighed: "Oh, porter, I'm so anxious."

"I'm not—now," he muttered, for she handed him a coin.

"Porter, have you seen anybody on board that looks suspicious?"

"Ev'vabody looks suspicious to me, Missy. But what was you expecting—special?"

"Oh, porter, have you seen anybody that looks like a detective in disguise?"

"Well, they's one man looks 's if he was disguised as a balloon, but I don't believe he's no sloop-hound."

"Well, if you see anybody that looks like a detective and he asks for Mrs. Fodick—"

"Mrs. Fodick! You tell him I'm not on board." And she gave him another coin.

"Yassum," said the porter, lingering willingly on such fertile soil. "I'll tell him Mrs. Fodick done give me her word she wasn't on bode."

"Yes!—and if a woman should ask you."

"What kind of a woman?"

"The hideous kind that men call handsome."

"Oh, ain't they hideous, them handsome women?"

"Well, if such a woman asks for Mrs. Fodick—she's my husband's first wife—but of course that doesn't interest you."

"No'm—yes'm."

"If she comes—tell her—tell her—oh, what shall we tell her?"

The porter rubbed his thick skull: "Lemme see—we might say you—tell you what we'll tell her: we'll tell her you took the train for New York; and if she runs mighty fast she can just about ketch it."

"Fine, fine!" And she rewarded his genius with another coin.

porter. He had not had a word to say, if a very handsome man with luscious eyes and a soulful smile asks for me—

"I'll th'ow him off the train!"

"Oh, no—no!—that's my husband—my present husband. You may let him in. Now is it all perfectly clear, porter?"

"Oh, yassum, clear as clear." Thus guaranteed she entered the stateroom, leaving the porter alone with his problem. He tried to work it out in a semi-audible mumble: "Lemme see! If your present husband's absent wife gets on bode disguised as a handsome hideous woman I'm to throw him—her—off the train and let her—him—come in—oh, yassum, you may rely on me." He bowed and held out his hand. But she was gone. He shuffled on into the car.

He had hardly left the little space before the stateroom when a handsome man with luscious eyes, but without any smile at all, came slinking along the corridor and tapped cautiously on the door. Silence alone answered him at first, then when he had rapped again, he heard a muffled:

"Go away. I'm not in."

He put his lips close and softly called: "Edith!"

At this Sesame the door opened a trifle, but when he tried to enter, a

again warned him off. "You musn't come in."

"But I'm your husband."

"That's just why you musn't come in." The door opened a little wider to give him a view of a down-cast beauty moaning:

"Oh, Arthur, I'm so afraid."

"Afraid?" he sniffed. "With your husband here?"

"That's the trouble, Arthur. What if your former wife should find us together?"

"But she and I are divorced."

"In some states, yes—but other states don't acknowledge the divorce. That former wife of yours is a fiend to pursue us this way."

"She's no worse than your former husband. He's pursuing us, too. My divorce was as good as yours, my dear."

"Yes, and no better."

The angels looking on might have judged from the ready tempers of the newly married and not entirely unmarried twain that their new alliance promised to be as exciting as their previous estates. Perhaps the man subtly felt the presence of those eternal eavesdroppers, for he tried to end the love-duel in the corridor with an appealing caress and a tender appeal: "But let's not start our honeymoon with a quarrel."

His partial wife returned the caress and tried to explain: "I'm not quarrelling with you, dear heart, but with the horrid divorce laws. Why, oh, why did we ever interfere with them?"

He made a brave effort with: "We ended two unhappy marriages, Edith, to make one happy one."

"But I'm so unhappy, Arthur, and so afraid!"

He seemed a trifle afraid himself and his gaze was askance as he urged: "But the train will start soon, Edith—and then we shall be safe."

Mrs. Fodick had a genius for inventing unpleasant possibilities. "But what if your former wife or my former husband should have a detective on board?"

"A detective?—poof!" He snapped his fingers in bravado. "You are with your husband, aren't you?"

"In Illinois, yes," she admitted, very dolefully. "But when we come to Iowa, I'm a bigamist, and when we come to Nebraska, you're a bigamist, and when we come to Wyoming, we're not married at all."

It was certainly a tangled web they had woven, but a ray of light shot through it into his bewildered soul. "But we're all right in Utah. Come, dearest."

He took her by the elbow to escort her into their sanctuary, but still she hung back.

"On one condition, Arthur—that you leave me as soon as we cross the Iowa state line, and not come back till we get to Utah. Remember, the Iowa state line!"

"Oh, all right," he smiled. And seeing the porter, beckoned him close and asked with careless indifference: "Oh, porter, what time do we reach the Iowa state line?"

"Two fifty-five in the mawning, sah."

"Two fifty-five a. m.?" the wretch exclaimed.

"Two fifty-five a. m., yassah," the porter repeated, and wondered why this excerpt from the time-table should exert such a dramatic effect on the luscious-eyed Fodick.

He had small time to meditate the puzzle, for the train was about to be launched upon its long voyage. He went out to the platform, and watched a couple making that way. As their only luggage was a dog-basket he supposed that they were simply come to bid some of his passengers good-bye.

No tips were to be expected from such transients, so he allowed them to help themselves up the steps.

Mallory and his Marjorie had tried to kiss the farewell or farewells half a dozen times, but she could not let him go at the gate. She asked the guard to let her through, and her beauty was bribe enough.

Again and again, she and Mallory paused. He wanted to take her back to the taxicab, but she would not be so dismissed. She must spend the last available second with him.

"I'll go as far as the steps of the car," she said. When they were arrived there, two porters, a sleeping car conductor and several smoking saunterers profaned the tryst. So she whispered that she would come aboard, for the corridor would be a quiet lane for the last rites.

And now that he had her actually on the train, Mallory's whole soul revolted against letting her go. The vision of her standing on the platform sad-eyed and lorn, while the train swept him off into space was unendurable. He shut his eyes against it, but it glowed inside the lids.

And then temptation whispered him its old "Why not?" While it was working in his soul like a fermenting yeast, he was saying:

"To think that we should owe all our misfortune to an infernal taxicab's break-down."

Out of the anguish of her loneliness crept one little complaint:

"If you had really wanted me, you'd have had two taxicabs."

"Oh, how can you say that? I had the license bought and the minister waiting."

"He's waiting yet."

"And the ring—there's the ring." He fished it out of his waistcoat pocket and held it before her as a golden amulet.

"A lot of good it does now," said Marjorie. "You won't even wait over till the next train."

"I've told you a thousand times, my love," he protested, desperately, "if I don't catch the transport, I'll be court-martialed. If this train is late, I'm



Rev. Walter Temple.  
lost. If you really loved me you'd come along with me."

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Her very eyes gasped at this astounding proposal.

"Why, Harry Mallory, you know it's impossible."

Like a sort of benevolent Satan, he laid the ground for his abduction: "You'll leave me, then, to spend three years without you—out among those Manila women."

She shook her head in terror at this vision. "It would be too horrible for words to have you marry one of those mahogany sirens."

He held out the apple. "Better come along, then."

"But how can I? We're not married."

He answered airily: "Oh, I'm sure there's a minister on board."

"But it would be too awful to be married with all the passengers gawking. No, I couldn't face it. Good-bye, honey."

She turned away, but he caught her arm: "Don't you love me?"

"To distraction. I'll wait for you, too."

"Three years is a long wait."

"But I'll wait, if you will."

With such devotion he could not tamper. It was too beautiful to risk or endanger or besmirch with any danger of scandal. He gave up his fantastic project and gathered her into his arms, crowded her into his very soul, as he vowed: "I'll wait for you forever and ever and ever."

Her arms swept around his neck, and she gave herself up as an exile from happiness, a prisoner of a far-off love:

"Good-bye, my husband-to-be."

"Good-bye my wife—that-was-to-have-been-and-will-be-maybe."

"Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

"I must go."

"Yes, you must."

"One last kiss."

"One more—one long last kiss."

And there, entwined in each other's arms, with lips wedded and eyelids clinched, they clung together, forgetting everything past, future or present. Love's anguish made them blind, mute and deaf.

They did not hear the conductor crying his "All Aboard!" down the long wall of the train. They did not hear the far-off knell of the bell. They did not hear the porters banging the vestibules shut. They did not feel the floor sliding out with them.

And so the porter found them, engulfed in one embrace, swaying and swaying, and no more aware of the increasing rush of the train than were other passengers on the earth-express are aware of its speed through the ether-routes on its ancient schedule.

The porter stood with his box-step in his hand, and blinked and wondered. And they did not even know they were observed.

#### CHAPTER IX.

##### All Aboard!

The starting of the train surprised the ironical decorators in the last stages of their work. Their smiles died out in a sudden shame, as it came over them that the joke had recoiled on their own heads. They had done their best to carry out the time-honored rite of making a newly married couple as miserable as possible—and the newly married couple had failed to do its share.

The two lieutenants glared at each other in mutual contempt. They had studied much at West Point about ambushes, and how to avoid them. Could Mallory have escaped the pit they had dugged for him? They looked at their handiwork in disgust.

The cosy-corner effect of white ribbons and orange flowers, gracefully masking the concealed rice-trap, had seemed the wittiest thing ever devised. Now it looked the silliest.

The other passengers were equally downcast. Meanwhile the two lovers in the corridor were kissing good-byes as if they were hoping to store up honey enough to sustain their hearts for a three years' fast. And the porter was studying them with perplexity.

He was used, however, to waking

Continued on page 7

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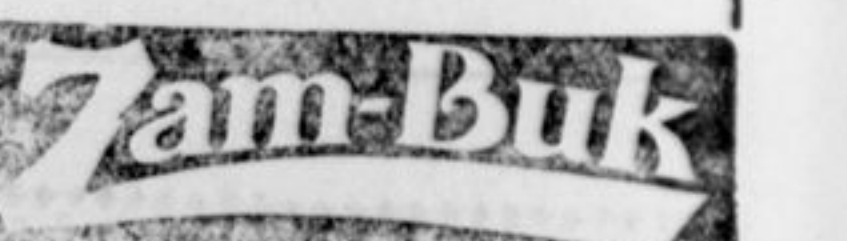
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#### A REVOLUTION IN SPAIN.

For many years the volcanic forces of revolution have been gathering around the Spanish throne, and it is doubtful whether King Alfonso will be able to weather the coming storm. It is designed to create, by means of a great national strike, a state of embarrassment and confusion, under cover of which the actual revolution can be launched.

It has been planned to take advantage of the deep-seated industrial unrest which long has been seething among all classes of Spanish workmen. It is said that the rank and file of the army are in sympathy with the revolutionists.