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'A WIFE'S STORY'

By JANE PHELPS

CHAPTER LIII

My opportunity to speak to Dave came sooner than I expected. He came in at tea time, found me alone. Paul had left for Canada that morning. Joan was in town, and Laura had gone boating with some of her young friends. I welcomed him gladly, taking no pains to hide my pleasure in his visit.

"You have neglected us, Dave," I said. "We have missed you."
"Have you missed me, Ruby?" he asked, bending an inscrutable look upon me.

"Of course I have! Now you must stay to dinner. Paul is away. Joan is in town, but Laura will soon be in, and she will be glad to see you," I explained, as I seated myself at the tea table.

"Laura is like you, Ruby. Nothing of Paul in her makeup," Dave said, then: "Never mind the tea. I want to talk to you."

"But you can talk and have your tea at the same time," I replied, wondering a bit at his brusqueness. He waved the cup away.

"Ruby, why do you suppose I have been coming here—coming where you were all these years?" he asked.

"Why, how terribly serious you are!" I said, a bit nervously, his manner, unusual, as if he were holding himself in check, reacting upon me.

"I mean to be serious. You haven't answered my question: Why do you suppose I have been coming where you were?"

"Because we are very good friends," I replied lightly. "And because you are fond of Paul. Do have a cup of tea, Dave. It will cheer you up."

be mine. I know you love me. You have given me a thousand reasons for knowing it. Your delight in seeing me, your confidence when worried, in many ways you have shown you cared, and Ruby I have—"

"Stop!" I cried at last. I had been too dazed, too shocked to interrupt, hoping I did not understand, that he meant only that he wanted to be my friend. But now his meaning was too clear, and horrified I cried out in protest.

"You don't realize what you are saying, what you are doing. It is hard to believe you would deliberately insult me, but you are. I love my husband, Dave, and even if I didn't I am his wife."

"You owe him nothing. What has he ever done for you? Let you slave for his children, take life easy while it was hard for you, and being untrue—for, Ruby, he has never been true to you—never!"

"I'll not believe that! Paul may not have always done right,—oh, how I regretted ever talking of my anxieties to Logan! "But I'll not believe him false to his vows."

"I can prove it, not in one instance but in many. Paul is a—"

"Stop!" I interrupted again. "I won't listen to another word!"

"Very well, Ruby, I'll say nothing more on that subject, but Paul has not cared for you honestly—"

"What do you mean? Paul is working hard, is being successful. I am proud of him. He had his time of weakness, but he is older now, has steadied down, and—oh, Dave! I thought you—were his best friend. How can you talk like this? I feel as if I were having some horrible nightmare."

"Why did you think I befriended him, a weakling whom I despised—only to be near you—with you, and—to make life easier for you. My money let me do that, and—she is dead, so you—"

LOCAL NEWS

Fuller brushes for Xmas, 45c-L.
Arundel, piano tuner. Phone 183-L.

C. G. Bunnell of Portland is in Roseburg and will spend a few days looking after business affairs.

We buy and sell everything in furniture at Powell's Second Hand Store.

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Mrs. L. W. Crocker left last night for Los Angeles where she will spend the next week or ten days visiting with friends and relatives.

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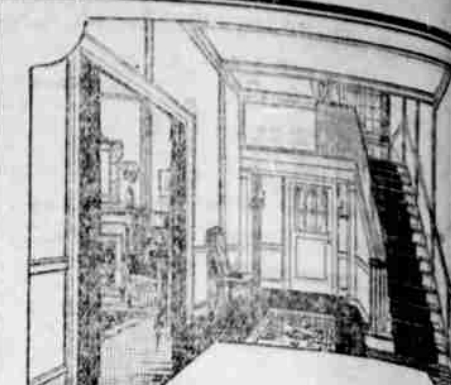
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