

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1908.

## A DETECTIVE'S LOVE STORY.

From New York Weekly.

Yes, sir, I am a lodging-house keeper. Yes, and, I've seen better days. They all say that, you tell me, and the best of them have, though I've nothing to complain of.

You want to know how such a plain, homely old fellow as Mr. Blackheath came to marry so pretty and young a girl as Rose. Rose is handsome, and a lady, and she might have married younger and richer men than Mr. Blackheath, but she couldn't have got a better one, and she knows it. He's got a heart of gold, that man has, and Rose has sense enough to know it.

I'll tell you how it all happened. Rose detested him once. I believe she looked upon him almost like the dirt under her feet. She was so proud and scornful in those days, and is yet, for that matter, to everybody but him. You see, when my husband dropped off in that sudden fashion—he had apoplexy, begging your pardon, sir—he left me with three children to take care of, besides myself.

Some women in my place would have been too proud to take lodgers, and would have seen themselves beggars in no time in consequence. I take it, sir, it is a great deal worse to be a beggar with three starving children, than it is to earn your living, no matter how you do it, so it's honest.

You see, I reasoned that here I was with a fine, well-finished house in a good locality, and there was not one thing I could do well but keep house, I'd been reared a lady, in a fashion, as much so as half of them, any way, if my father was a butcher. He was rich, and I had been to a fashionable boarding-school as long as I liked. Money will pay for anything, you know, sir, and my father never grudged his in getting me an education and accomplishments. Money, sir, will buy you anything but brains, and I've my doubts on that point. I'm sure when I entered Madame Montmorency's fine boarding-school, I was the biggest fool of them all, though I had the finest rooms, and the most spending money, and was never refused a day out when the rest had to stay in. You see, I was madam's best-paying pupil, and thought I never knew anything from first to last of what I went there to learn, I came out with such honors, such paintings and drawings, (between you and me, the drawing-master did the most of them) that I really did not know myself.

Then I married. Then papa failed, and, you see, when my husband died, I had no one to look to but myself, and I did it. All of which is not telling you how Mr. Blackheath (a detective, you know, of course) came to get his pretty wife. Well, it was in a fashionable locality, and my rooms were handsome, and so I advertised for lodgers. I had no difficulty in getting them. Nobody ever left me who tried my rooms and my ways. Mrs. Fanfarelle was my parlor boarder. She and her husband had the parlor suit of rooms, and paid well for them, as they ought. They were fine rooms, and furnished elegantly.

Mrs. Fanfarelle was the handsomest woman I ever saw, and the largest. When she swept across those three parlors in her gold-and-black evening dress, diamonds in her hair and roses on her breast, and a splendid fan in her hand, she looked like an empress, and might have been one, I dare say, if she had not chosen to marry a man about as nearly worthy of being her husband as the leading man at the Crown Theater in Favot street.

Mr. Fanfarelle was a very grand and elegant-looking gentleman, tall and finely formed with lovely hands and feet. He might have been walking gentleman at any of the shops in Oxford street. Indeed, I have always suspected he was in the beginning.

Anyway, Mrs. Fanfarelle worshiped him beyond anything. She worshiped him too much.

You can worship a man too much, a great deal quicker than you can a woman, because, however great a woman's vanity, her love exceeds it, and with a man vice versa.

Well, Mrs. Fanfarelle was a princess. She was as handsome as one and as stately, and she had the jewels of one.

They gave a great many parties, and I attended to everything. It was well of course.

Mrs. Fanfarelle was greatly admired by every one but her husband. I do not say she was not by him, only she never thought of any one but him, and he liked anything of womankind that was pretty.

That is how he came to fancy Rose Massy. Rose was a sort of distant cousin of mine, and staid with me as a kind of upper servant. I paid her well, but she was worth the money, so elegant and stylish-looking, so pleasant and affable, and withal so dignified. Rose would have done credit to any establishment.

Of course, as the Fanfarelles were my best lodgers, I was anxious to please them the most of any, and I did hope Mrs. Fanfarelle would be struck with Rose.

But she wasn't—at least, not in the way I wished her to be. Talk about love at first sight, Mrs. Fanfarelle hated Rose Massy the first time she set eyes on her.

Why? Because she was handsome, did-looking. You've seen her, sir, and you know that. If Rose Massy had been born in Mrs. Fanfarelle's condition of life, she would have outshone her as much as the sun does the stars.

As it was, Rose was as much on her dignity as Mrs. Fanfarelle, though only a servant herself.

"Stuck up old thing!" she said to me, two or three days after the Fanfarelles came. "Her beauty is nothing but paint and powder, and false hair. Thank Heaven, what little good looks I have are mine by nature."

"Well, yes," I said to Rose, "that may all be; but don't put on any of your hifalutin airs to them, for they are about the only lodgers of any account we have in the house."

Mrs. Fanfarelle had paid me a month in advance, and promised me in her careless, imperious way, that neither she nor her husband would grumble at any reasonable bill for extras at the end of the month. They wanted to be well served, and were perfectly willing to pay for it. Of course, after that, I didn't want Rose, who was dreadfully high-spirited, to be anything but as obsequious as possible to them, and she promised me faithfully she would not.

Well, things went on so for about a month. I hadn't any one in the house to speak of, but Mr. and Mrs. Fanfarelle, and sometimes guests of theirs who came and stopped as if it had been the Fanfarelle's house instead of mine.

But Mrs. Fanfarelle paid like a princess. She had said she should never grumble at bills, and she did not. I will give her that justice.

But she did grumble about Rose. "I don't like Rose," she said to me softly. "She is a forward impudent minx."

Well, I took the hint and kept Rose out of the way as much as I could, though it was hard to do, for Rose was my main stand-by—servants in a general way are so untrusty.

Rose was like myself; she always did the right thing. However, I kept her out of Mrs. Fanfarelle's way, without saying anything, as much as I could.

But I couldn't keep her entirely out of Mrs. Fanfarelle's way, especially as I was as innocent as a goose, and never suspected him of being at the bottom of everything.

One morning, a week after Mrs. Fanfarelle had made that speech about Rose, she stopped me again as I was passing her door.

She was very sweet and smiling, and had on the loveliest morning dress of rose-colored cashmere, with trimmings of fine lace, and a rose in her hair. Oh, she did look lovely!

"My dear Mrs. Fanfarelle," she said, quite condescendingly. "I want you to do me a favor."

"What is it?" she said. "She had a bunch of roses in her hand. I could smell them where I stood."

"My husband gave them to me this morning," she said, kissing them. "He always brings me flowers in the morning. I love them so; but I hate rose," and she threw them on the floor, angrily, then picked them up again and held them against her face. "I can't hate anything he gives me," she added.

She stood so, caressing her roses for a moment, then suddenly she turned to me, and said:—

"Mrs. Fanfarelle, I believe I told you I did not like that servant of yours—that tall girl, with black eyes and hair."

"You did, madam," I said, respectfully. She stared at me a moment. She had big black eyes, as well as the girl she was talking about.

"Why have you not discharged her?" she demanded, arrogantly. "For two reasons," I answered. "She is of great use to me, and she is a relative, a cousin of mine, madam. I thought if I kept her employed where you need not see much of her, that you would not mind."

"Oh! a cousin?" she said, slowly. "I do not wish to offend you, Mrs. Fanfarelle, but I assure you she is not at all a nice kind of person. In fact, it is quite an injury to you, having her in your house."

"Indeed!" I answered. "In what manner?" "Because of her lightness of disposition. I presume she means no harm—indeed, I am sure she does not—but she has a way of—well, a sort of way with gentlemen—Excuse me, Mrs. Fanfarelle, but I don't like her way with gentlemen."

"What gentleman?" I asked. "Oh, I can't specify," she said, softly. "Of course, I cannot. But I do think the sooner she marries that Mr. Blackheath she is so fond of, the better for her."

"Fond of him, madam?" I answered, laughing a little. "Why, she hates the very sight of him."

She did then. She had a kind way with her to every one, and Mr. Blackheath seemed a lone sort of body, so she was kind to him. But when he asked her to marry him, not once but many times, she began to hate the very sight of him.

"Marry an old fogey like him?" she said. "Why, he must think I'm a born idiot. He's not handsome, he's not rich, he's not young. Why does the man think I would marry him?"

"She hates the very sight of him," I said to Mrs. Fanfarelle. "The more fool she," Mrs. Fanfarelle answered, coolly. "He loves her, I am sure, I am quite ready, though I do not like her at all, to give her a handsome dowry at her marriage. You see," she added, "I do not wish you to consult a lawyer or a disliking without being paid for it."

She bowed in her haughty way, and went into her rooms. I just stood still and wondered why Mrs. Fanfarelle did not like Rose. To be sure, Rose was as haughty, in her way, as Mrs. Fanfarelle in hers. But she could be a million times more affable and sweet, and never show off any of her airs to my lodgers, so far as I knew.

Still she had evidently, somehow, offended Mrs. Fanfarelle. "I'll tell you," said Rose, scornfully, when I put the question to her squarely. "I am too handsome to please madam. I've never told you, Maria—my first name is Maria, sir—because I saw you were worried already, but before you were so kind as to take me in and be so good to me, I was a shop girl in Oxford street, you know, and Mr. Fanfarelle was floor-walker there. He wanted me to marry him then, and I said 'No.' I did starve before I'd marry a man I did not love. Then this woman fell in love with him. She used to come to the store often. She was a rich widow, and Fanfarelle is handsome, and he married her. He has insulted me by admiring me since they came here. I have never spoken to him since the first day, though he has tried often enough to make me. There it is, Maria—madam hates me because she is jealous of me. I'll go away, that is what I will do; I am very fond of you, and I'd rather stay, but I see I shall drive away your best lodgers if I remain."

"You shan't go one step," said I. "I'm fond of you, too, Rose. I'm sure you're a better mother to the children than I am," and so she was, sir. I can get plenty of lodgers as good as Mrs. Fanfarelle. I dare say, so if she chooses to go because I stick by my own flesh and blood, let her."

"All right," said Rose. "I'm ready, but don't you talk to me about marrying Mr. Blackheath. If you do, I'll run away with Mr. Fanfarelle. He'd take me in a minute."

She was only joking, of course. Suddenly I fancied I smelled something burning in the kitchen, and I was up and off in no time as you may imagine.

(To be continued)

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Philadelphia Inquirer.

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