

A DETECTIVE'S LOVE STORY.

From New York Weekly. Presently the Inspector sent for Mr. Blackheath, and the next moment for me. He was very respectful. "I shall have to search your house, Mrs. Panset," he said to me. "Search," I said, and begin with me. I have too much confidence in my servants as in myself. I am having my room searched first, to show them that I have. "Very well," the Inspector said, with an odd look at me, and then he and Mr. Blackheath went into my room together. I followed them, of course. Rose was raging. "Does Mrs. Fanfarelle dare to think you are a thief, Maria?" she asked. I laughed. "Not at all, Rose. It is a mere form. I have as much confidence in my servants as in myself. I am having my room searched first, to show them that I have." Rose threw up her head. Her eyes were blazing, her cheeks like fire. "The idea," she said. "Well, when they get through searching your room, they had better go to mine." That moment the Inspector exclaimed:—"Mrs. Panset!" "Well, sir?" I answered, turning toward him. He held in his hand the bracelets Mrs. Fanfarelle had given Rose, and which she had scornfully left in my room. I laughed heartily; I could not help it. "Those were not stolen, Mr. Inspector," I said. "Rose can tell you that Mrs. Fanfarelle gave them to her, and she gave them to me." "Yes, I did," my cousin cried. The Inspector looked at her. He had scarcely noticed her before, and I saw an admiring expression come into his cold eyes. Rose did look awfully handsome. She had on a new red and black dress I had given her; her cheeks were red, and she had hair like black satin. It was nearly a minute before the Inspector could get his eyes off her and back to the bracelets. "Mrs. Fanfarelle gave you these?" he asked, in a voice of amazement. "Mrs. Fanfarelle gave them to me," Rose cried, stamping her foot. The Inspector glanced at the foot. It was a very pretty one. I am almost as proud of Rose's foot as she is herself. She wears number two, sir, and she is not a small woman either. The Inspector laid the bracelets down. "Where shall we go next, Mrs. Panset?" he asked me. "To my room," Rose said promptly. "Come." She led the way. Mr. Blackheath hung back, till Rose spoke to him: "You come, too," she said. "Perhaps you'll find another pair of bracelets in my room." Then he went, and so did I. Rose had a sweet room. I was very proud of it as she threw it open, and let us in. She had fixed it up herself. Blue and white cambric at the bed, blue muslin, with white inside, at the window, the chairs covered the same way. It was very seldom any one went into Rose's room, besides herself and me, but she seemed just as much for herself as any one else. She didn't dress her room or herself for other people's eyes; and she was a girl who suffered actual pain in having any of her privacies interfered with. When the Inspector opened her chest of drawers, she lit her lip hard, and then going to the window, stood there with her back to them. I don't think he half looked through the drawers, and Mr. Blackheath positively acted frightened. He went and stood by Rose, and spoke to her in a low voice. "Don't blame me, Miss Massy," he said. "Just say the word, and I'll knock that man down or throw him out of window—just which you say." Rose laughed out. It was so absurd, you see. The Inspector stood six feet in his boots, and Mr. Blackheath is a small man, you know, sir. "Thank you for the offer," she said to Mr. Blackheath. "It is the best thing you ever said to me. When this business is over, if you will go down and help me throw Mrs. Fanfarelle out of the window, I shall be obliged, indeed."

"And Mr. Fanfarelle?" he questioned. My cousin's lip curled. "Mr. Fanfarelle?" she said. "Why, he is nothing but a milliner's block. Talk about man and wife being one. She's the one. He is a cipher, an image, a wooden block. I hate her—but him—he is even beneath contempt!" I had heard every word. I liked Mr. Blackheath, but I had never wanted Rose to marry him. I thought then that she could do a great deal better. I have changed my mind since. Well, when Rose said that, Mr. Blackheath turned and looked at me—I suppose he felt my friendliness—and I never saw such a look of exultation. Actually the man had been jealous of Mr. Fanfarelle all the while. He imagined that Rose had loved him once, and loved him still. Well, all this time I stood by the Inspector. He was examining my cousin's bureau, and he looked ashamed of his business. I noticed, when he opened the top drawer, a little morocco box, that I had never seen there before, and I took it up and opened it. Will you believe me, sir, there were a pair of earrings and a brooch, the very match of the bracelets Mrs. Fanfarelle had given Rose. I dropped the box as if it had bitten me. If I had found it full of scorpions I should not have been more frightened. The Inspector stared too. "I am very sorry, Mrs. Panset," he said to me, "I am indeed. Such a beautiful, noble-looking girl, too." "What do you mean by that?" I demanded, sharply. His face seemed to harden. "You know what I mean, Mrs. Panset," he said coldly. "The bracelets I saw in your room, and these things are among those Mrs. Fanfarelle has missed." "Rose," I called, "come here and tell how you came by this brooch and earrings." She came promptly, her big black eyes opening wide at sight of them. "Where did you find those?" "Here in your bureau drawer," I said. The Inspector and I both were looking at her. "In my bureau?" she said, wonderingly, taking them in her hand. "Why, I never saw them before in my life. Nor this either," taking up a square ivory and gold case. The Inspector jumped. "Alloy me," he said, and taking it from her hand, opened it. There was the miniature, set in rubies, of that precious wretch, Fanfarelle. You could have knocked me down with a feather when I saw it. As for Rose, she just snatched the case, miniature, rubies, and all, and going to the door, threw it out as forcibly as she could. "Now," she said, coming back to the room, and facing the Inspector, "will you kindly see what else you can find that doesn't belong to me?" He had been busy. He showed her a ring of diamonds and opals. "This is one of the things Mrs. Fanfarelle spoke of as being missing," he said. "Oh!" she said. "Where did that come from?" And then she put her hand to her side and turned very white. Mr. Blackheath came forward instantly and stood beside her, taking her hand in his, and facing the Inspector with a face almost as white as hers. "Leave this case to me, Mr. Varney," he said. Varney was the Inspector's name. He glared a little. "I don't know why I should," he said. "Because I am your superior, and if you go to headquarters, you will find several other reasons," Mr. Blackheath said, softly. The Inspector braced himself, and looked at Mr. Blackheath. "You are in love with the girl; any one can see that," he said. "How do you suppose they will regard that at headquarters?" "I don't care how they regard it," said Mr. Blackheath. "You mind your own business, and I will do the same." "My business is to work out this case," said Mr. Varney, doggedly. "I have had it under consideration a long time." "The case you have!" said Mr. Blackheath, and instantly turning

to me and Rose. "I beg a million pardons, but one cannot always control his temper, and this fellow is such a fool!" Rose wrenched her hand out of Mr. Blackheath's, and marched up to the Inspector. "Do you dare to say you have been watching me—having me under consideration a long time?" she demanded. Mr. Varney actually lunged his head. "I didn't know it was you, miss, and I'm sorry it is," he said, in a low voice. He had scarcely got the words out of his mouth—indeed, he had really—when Blackheath took hold of him. Well, sir, Mr. Blackheath was about half as high as Mr. Varney. Did you ever see a Scotch terrier take a bull dog by the throat? I have. You may talk about courage, and you may abuse small people and small dogs; but if you had seen that little man take hold of the big one, if you had seen the big one go down those three flights of stairs as if he had been shot out of a gun, you'd think as I do, that size is no mark of courage. I declare to you I was frightened out of my wits. But Rose was not. She met Mr. Blackheath at the top of the staircase with both hands out. "I was a very foolish woman, Mr. Blackheath," she said, "when I refused to marry you. You are the only man in this world who deserves an honest wife. Prove me an honest girl, and not a thief, and I will marry you the next moment." And with that, sir, my Cousin Rose, who never cried for anything before, to my knowledge, burst into tears; and Mr. Blackheath, instead of taking her in his arms as most men would have done, put her into mine and said: "Dear Mrs. Panset, take her to your room and keep her there. This is a very simple business. I shall clear it up, you will see." I met his eyes. Eyes can talk, sir, plainer than tongues sometimes. His said: "I will do it, or die trying." [To be continued.]

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