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you will not. It would create a great scandal. Fancy a scandal in the eminently respectable Frelinghuysen fold.

"Damn you!"

The noise of the plate and glass, combined with the murmur of other people's voices, drowned the conversation carried on by the man and woman. Miss Frelinghuysen, across the table, caught her brother's eye and smiled. She was glad he seemed so interested in her friend; he was courteous always, but rarely so engrossed as now.

"No," Mrs. Carmichael said, emphatically, "polite society is not polite. We both belong to it, and we both are very rude—you even more so than I. But the natural man is rude, and surprise has rendered you primitive." She laughed again and sipped her wine appreciatively.

"We had nothing like this in the old days, had we? How far away that time seems now, does it not?"

"What do you mean to do?" growled Frelinghuysen under his breath.

"Finish my dinner."

"You understand well enough. What shall you do to me—blackmail or hush money?"

Mrs. Carmichael gave an amused laugh that floated down the table, and made Miss Frelinghuysen smile sympathetically. Her brother could be entertaining when he chose; only he so rarely chose.

Mrs. Carmichael continued. "Your ingenuousness is delightful. 'Blackmail—hush money.' She smothered another laugh. "Cher ami, what do I want with your money—I, who have more than you?"

"But you cannot mean to publish the affair?"

"Am I a fool that I should blast myself in order to hurt you? Thank you, no. I mean to do nothing. I assure you. I have nothing to gain and should lose everything. And—I am fond of your sister."

"Leave my sister's name alone."

"Ignore my hostess—commit such a *betise*? Surely you are not in earnest. But rest tranquil; I shall not disturb your respectability—not more than I have already done. I should have left you entirely alone, only you were so densely respectable that you irritated me. My natural devil still reigns within; it is only outwardly I am changed. Don't you want to know how I came here?"

"It is a matter of perfect indifference to me." With the knowledge that she would not expose him came a sense of relief. Now he longed only to get away from her.

"Nevertheless I shall tell you. We must talk and you are sulking—quite as in old times. Don't wince! You won't have to put up with me much longer. Dinner is half over, and to-morrow we leave town. She nodded to the servant to fill her glass, and she sipped the sparkling Ruinart before she began:

"You were about nineteen when you came out to Colorado, and you were trying your wings wanting to know—thinking yourself a man—just how devilish you could be! It was in that spirit you married Sally Forbes. She no longer exists, you know; I am Victoria Car-

michael. Most men would not have married her; but for that very reason you did. You were willing to go greater lengths. And marriage was nothing anyway. You never meant to bring her east. She did not place much faith in you. She was no simpleton, though only sixteen. A miner's pretty daughter knows at that age many things of the very existence of which many women die in ignorance." She paused a moment as the memory of details came over her, and the man on her other side took this opportunity to break in; he had seen none other.

"I say, Mrs. Carmichael, you and Frelinghuysen seem terribly absorbed; it isn't fair not even to notice me."

"You are selfish beyond bounds, Mr. Bryce. Shall I try to have your attention when there is such an attractive woman at your right? And Mr. Frelinghuysen and I are talking of when we were young; that is always delightful, you know." She smiled and turned again to Frelinghuysen, who was making a pretense of dining. Absently he noticed that he had no appetite.

"You and Sally were together fully a month after you were married, were you not? Then, one day, you discovered your wife graciously allowing one of the 'hands' to kiss her. Mon Dieu! I can see you now! You nearly annihilated poor little Sally, merely because a 'hand' had kissed her. If it had been one of your chums who had done it you would not have minded; he would have simply been indorsing your good taste. But a 'hand' to dare embrace Mrs. Frelinghuysen, wife of the scion of that house—gods, what ignominy!"

"Hush!" the man interrupted.

"No one will hear—I am discreet. Sally could not comprehend the distinction; a man was a man; the matter ended there. But you flung yourself out of the room and went straight back east. If the truth were known, you were glad of the excuse. Once home you wrote—I have that letter now—that you would send \$50 a month to your wife if she would remain in Colorado and not trouble you. The letter was not answered, because I could not write well enough. It was about that time that luck changed, and my father decided to go to the gold fields of Australia. The ship we sailed in was wrecked. Ah, what an experience that was!" She shuddered and drank some wine hastily; it was a moment before she could command herself. "Only those who have lived through a panic on shipboard can know the horror of it." She laughed nervously and went on. "Very few passengers were saved, but my father and I were among them. When we landed at last in Australia I saw my sister's name and mine were among the drowned. I had a sister, a year younger, whom you never saw; she was staying in another camp when you were with us. I had that list mailed to you; I wanted you to think me dead. It was an opportunity for me to begin anew in a new country. After a few years I married Mr. Carmichael. I was not afraid—I never expected to see you. He was quite eligible, I assure you—a foreman, and he became a money

king. It is quite a thrilling story, is it not?"

Her listener vouchsafed no reply, but Mrs. Carmichael seemed to feel no resentment.

"I was most wretched when first we became rich; I did not know what to do. Mr. Carmichael insisted upon a great establishment in Melbourne, but my experience with you had taught me that the people with whom we wanted to cast our lot lived in a world whereof we knew nothing, and I did not care to be rejected by them. It was difficult to make Mr. Carmichael see my point, but, when he comprehended, what do you suppose I did?"

"I have not the least idea." Frelinghuysen's tone implied that he cared less.

"We were still 'up country,' and I went down to Sidney, straight to France, and into a convent for two years. No girl ever studied as I did, and I nearly killed myself, strong though I was. But I meant to come out of there a lady."

"Evidently you succeeded—in appearance," the man remarked.

"I succeeded," the woman repeated. "Then I went back to Sydney, and my husband met me, and we went to Melbourne and established ourselves. Mr. Carmichael had the benefit of my two years'—"

"How delightful!" Frelinghuysen drawled.

"Oh, be insolent if you like; it does not affect me. Two years ago we went to London. It was there I met your sister. You cannot think how amused I was at encountering my sister-in-law!" She laughed pleasantly. "At first I was consumed with a desire to tell her who I was. Sometimes I had to bite my lips not to scream it aloud. Then I began to admire her, and ever since she has been my model."

"*Quel honneur!*" the man remarked.

"It is wonderful," Mrs. Carmichael continued sweetly, "that one family should produce two people so totally dissimilar as you and she."

"She does not know you as I do."

"True, she lacks the evil to develop the same in me." She took up her gloves preparatory to leaving; the hostess would give the signal in a few moments. "Your dinner has not been uninteresting, monsieur? I am so charmed I shall trust to see you when I have a cup of tea tomorrow with Mrs. Frelinghuysen."

"You will not enter my wife's door," the man observed.

"Your—what? Ah! of course, Mrs. Frelinghuysen. You could not tell her not to receive me; an explanation would be necessary, and explanations are awkward." She dropped the mocking tone and rose with the other women. "In the drawing-room I wish to see you," she said. "Come to me, or I shall send for you."

The man bowed.

She was watching for him when the men came in after dinner, and avoided those who would have talked to her. Frelinghuysen silently took the chair she indicated.

"I want to tell you," she said, "that it is all a lie."

"I do not understand."

"The story, don't you know. I am not Sally Forbes."

"Then—pardon me—are you the devil?"

Mrs. Carmichael smiled. "Only so far as all women are. I am Sally's sister—the younger sister whom you never saw. We looked so much alike that people could not tell us apart. That is why I seemed familiar to you. Sallie is dead. She was drowned. It was rather a questionable proceeding—my story—but I had heard that you were so very, very indifferent, I determined to rouse you. I succeeded, did I not?"

"*Place aux dames!* The palm is yours beyond doubt."

Mrs. Carmichael laughed and put out her hand. "We are going. Good night, I shall see you tomorrow?"

"Without fail," and Frelinghuysen turned to find his wife.

Mrs. Frelinghuysen accosted him eagerly. "Well," she said, "was Mrs. Carmichael all that you expected?"

"Yes," he answered. "All that—and more!"—The Romancer.

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