

Adele Garrison
"My Husband's Love"

Is There Something Really Serious Troubling Leila?
As Alfred Durkee and I entered the living room where Her Pluffiness and Leila were sitting over the fast-dying fire, the eyes of the elder woman flitted from my face to her son's. Mirrored in them was a question:
"Did you tell him?"
I answered the anxious unspoken query by crossing swiftly to her and bending over her with a kiss.
"He knows all about it," I whispered, "and I'm going to take Leila upstairs so you two can have a good talk."
A grateful, tremulous smile was her only answer. I saw that speech for the moment was beyond her, and turned to Leila with a pretended yawn.
"Please forgive me, dear," I pleaded speciously, "but I am terribly tired. May I go to bed?"
"Of course," she rose as promptly as her tender ankle would permit and slipped her arm through mine. "I'll go right upstairs with you and see that you're settled. Good-night, mother dear. Don't forget to lock up Alf."
She smiled tenderly at her mother-in-law, and little Mrs. Durkee called an affectionate good-night after her as we left the room. Taking care not to turn the ankle which had given us all so much trouble, Leila led the way to the room which Mrs. Durkee had given me, and when she reached there looked at me wistfully.
"Leila has a 'Good Cry,'" she said, and the words with the expression of her eyes were an unconscious confession of the disappointment which was hers at not having an opportunity to talk to me.
"That's where you're mistaken," I

said with purposely assumed gaiety. "I must confess to having prevaricated grossly to our dear ones downstairs. The truth is that I wanted a good quiet pow-wow with you, and managed accordingly."
"You dear!" she breathed, her eyes widening, and then, without further warning, her slender hands went up to her face and she burst into a storm of sobs and tears.
I quickly crossed to the door behind us and turned the key. Then I went back to her, and swept the slender, shaking figure into my arms, pressing one of my handkerchiefs into her hands.
"What you need," I announced with decision, and a direct plagiarism of Lillian's words to me upon two or three occasions, "is a good cry. So take it while you have the chance, and then we'll talk."
"Tell Me All About It."
There was no answer save the sobs that shook her, but she clung to me so convulsively that I knew my nearness and sympathy were the best things she could have, and I said nothing more, only held her close and stroked her hair until the paroxysm was passed. But when she finally raised her tear-stained face to mine, I was startled and alarmed at its deadly pallor.
"You are ill, dear," I said. "Let me get you something."
"No! No!" she clung to me in alarm. "I don't need anything except to lie down. If you went after something, Alfred might hear you, and I wouldn't have him guess—for anything!"
My heart was hot with anger against Alfred, but I knew that her terror of his knowledge was so real that I would have to humor her for the moment at least. So I drew her to the bed, tossed my things upon it

into the nearest chair and stripped off the emporied covering.
"Lie down here," I said, "and I'll take your shoes off."
She obeyed me meekly, and I took off her shoes and covered her warmly with the soft comforter I found rolled at the foot of the bed.
"Now," I said decidedly, "I'm going to lock the door behind me and get you something from the medicine-

closet. Not a word, for I happen to know that Alfred won't be upstairs for the next quarter of an hour, at least. I'll tell you how I know when I get back. Lie still like a good girl."
I left the room before she could protest further, locking the door behind me as I had promised. Inside of two minutes I was back again, thanks to the housewife's orderliness of little Mrs. Durkee's medicine-closet,

with a pungent restorative and a glass of cold water, both of which Leila swallowed obediently. Then, with her hands tightly clasped in mine, I waited.
"I'm all right now," she quavered at length, the color stealing back to her cheeks.
"Then," I said practically, "suppose you tell me all about it."
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