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A Dangerous Flirtation

By MARVIN BROWN.

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Lily Price took down her hair and smiled at her reflection in the mirror of her room. Then she smiled at the remembrances of the evening. Mr. Ferris was evidently in love with her, and, while she could not honorably have encouraged him, she could not avoid a certain feeling of elation.

Her father, a hard-working city clerk, had sent her to this expensive mountain hotel in order to accelerate her recovery from an illness brought on by long confinement in a stuffy office. Lily was engaged to John Shaw, the curate of her home town.

She had spent the whole evening with Ferris, and had half promised to go driving with him on the morrow.

She went to bed happy, and arose next morning with the same sense of elation. It was said that Ferris was rich.

She frowned when she saw a letter from John beside her plate. She read it with a contraction of her pretty brows. John breathed devotion in every syllable, and he was coming to Lakeview lodge that very day, to spend the week-end with her. In that case there would be no drive with Philip Ferris.

"Bad news, Miss Price?' asked Ferris, a few minutes later, coming up to her as she sat on the veranda. "I saw you looking unhappy over a letter and I hoped it was nothing unpleasant."

"Oh, no," said Lily with a sigh, putting away the letter in her bag.

"Then how about our drive?" volunteered Ferris. "Have you ever been round Blue mountain?"

"I'm afraid I can't go, Mr. Ferris," said Lily. "I'm expecting a friend—I mean my—" She broke off in confusion.

Ferris smiled understandingly. He had no desire of marrying her; it was only a week-end flirtation.

"It will be a tragedy to me, if you won't come," he said, pressing her hand ever so gently. "You have made me mortally jealous of your friend—"

"Oh, he's so slow," Lily burst out petulantly. She sprang to her feet. "I'll come," she said, and ran into the house.

John Shaw was due to arrive at four. He would arrive to discover that Lily was away. Well, she did not care. It should be a lesson to him.

At three o'clock promptly she entered the carriage. The drive was splendid. As they ascended the mountain road Ferris leaned toward her.

"I'm mortally jealous of that sweetheart of yours," he said. "Who is he?"

"He's a clergyman," answered Lily.

Ferris burst into a roar of laughter. "A clergyman. Ho, ho!" he roared. "Then there wouldn't be any harm in this!"

He drew her to him and kissed her. It was not the first time that the girl had been kissed, even excepting John, but there was something in the young man's demeanor that scared her.

"Please don't," she begged, as he showed every sign of repeating the act. "That isn't honorable."

"Why isn't it honorable?" asked Ferris, letting the horse gallop on with loose reins.

"Why isn't it honorable?" demanded Ferris again, and suddenly caught her in his arms. "A clergyman isn't a man; he's a sort of mongrel."

Lily screamed—she was really afraid of her companion now. Ferris had released the reins entirely, and the horse, startled by the sudden sound, kicked up its heels and darted wildly down the mountain road.

"Hold him!" cried the girl, and then, to her amazement, she saw that Ferris was clinging, panic-stricken, to the side of the carriage. His face was white as chalk and his hands too nerveless to grasp the reins.

The animal was pulled back upon its haunches. John Shaw stood in the way. He was clinging with one strong hand to the horse's bridle, while with the other he patted the frigtened creature's neck. When at last it stood, quivering with fright, Shaw turned to Lily.

"I didn't know it was you," he said, and his face was as white as Ferris'. "If I had known I might have lost my presence of mind. I was walking up from the station and I heard somebody scream."

He lifted her from her seat and set her down.

Ferris descended from the vehicle and came toward her, wearing a foolish smile.

"Th-that was a n-near scrape, wasn't it?" he stammered.

"I won't detain you now," said John, rather coldly, lifting his hat. "Perhaps, though, your friend would like me to take the carriage back to the stables."

"No," said Lily, clinging to him. "Take me back, John. I have been a little fool, and I am very much ashamed. I want to tell you, and ask you to forgive me, John."

Not Now.

"Why did you let that man go without selling him a car?"

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