

"I should never expect you to give up anything, Cecily. Giving up is not your special talent," retorted the Duchess. She turned to Kendrick. "I heard you were lunching here, that's why I came."

"I'm flattered, Duchess," he said.

"I want to know all the inside news from the front," she began.

Luncheon was announced, and Lord Kendrick led the way with Lady Trask.

"It serves you right," said he.

"For what?"

"Luring me here under false pretences."

"Ashton invited you——"

"An hour ago—to drop into lunch, *en famille*."

"You would have preferred me, alone?"

"I expected to talk shop with your husband," he evaded.

"That's not a pretty speech."

"I'm not a pretty speechmaker, Lady Trask."

"The men were lunching here. I asked Mildred and Cecily, because I thought they would amuse you."

"Who is Cecily?"

"Lady Harrison. She's next you."