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A FOILED AMBUSH.

By Beatrice Heron-Maxwell.

"Can you tell me the name of the girl in grey?" he asked, as they took their places at luncheon.

The woman whom he addressed directed a languid glance down the long table in the direction in dicated, and said indifferently, "I don't quite see which you mean."

"The one wit a face like a saint and a halo of grey feather trimming found it," he answered. His words seemed irreverent, but his tone expressed admiration, and the brown eyes looked into his darkened with annoyance.

"That is Estelle Beaulieu," she said briefly, and busied herself taking off her gloves.

"Estelle," he murmured under his breath, "it reminded me of her, yet I hardly thought—do you know that it is five years since I met her last, Mrs. Dameril?" he added loudly.

"Is it?" rMs. Dameril's tone expressed only a polite interest.

"Yes, it must hbe five years this month. Just about the same time since I saw you. We were all staying down at Folkstone. Do you remember? and, as a matter of fact, she and I quarrelled. By-the-bye, you were the indirect cause of our difference of opinion too."

"Really?" Mrs. Damreil had been looking at him attentively, but her long lashes swept over her eyes now; or he would have seen that there was no surprise in them, only a gleam of triumphant pleasure.

He was still occupied with his reminiscences, and went on happily.

"You and I were both staying with the Halwards, I recollect, and used to ride and skate together. She took it into her head we were very great friends, and one day she accused me of saying something uncomplimentary about her to you. I told her she must have misunderstood you, and then she got vexed and wouldn't listen to any explanation. It was the day before I returned to town, and a month after that I went abroad."

"So suddenly that you couldn't find time to say good-bye to any of your old friends," said Mrs. Damrell ironically.

"Did I not?" he queried. "That was very remiss of me. What a lot has happened since then. I had not even heard of your marriage, and now you are a widow."

"But you and Estelle never did get on very well," she remarked. "She was too high-flown and effervescent for you. She was all purpose and theory, and you were all practical energy. To be reciprocal to yours, a woman should have a calm and placid nature; something on which, in your tired moments, you could lean."

She spoke with a quiet smooth accent, and Mr. Godfrey Basing looked at her for the first time with real attention. The low, soothing voice harmonized well with the repose and regnement of correctly handsome features; there was an air of essential equanimity about her bearing, and it was only at odd moments that the brown eyes negatives this when their sleepy softness flashed suddenly into impetuous life.

"Perhaps you are right," he said, while a touch of sentiment crept into his tone, and for a moment their mutual glance met.

"She is handsomer than she used to be," he reflected, "and even more sympathetic.

"He is beginning to remember," thought Mrs. Dameril, "my influence ough to be stronger now.' I know my power, and I can make my opportunities.' But even while this flashed thru her mind, she saw that his mood had changed.

His gaze, travelling past her, was resting again on the gil in grey, a girl with a pale rapt face, out of which shone eyes like stars, and whose lips seemed to hold a world of raving grace in their grave sweetness.

"Still I think everybody should accomplish at least one thing in their lives," he said; "should set their mark on time in some way, however small. I like individuality to be demonstrated. Estelle had individuality, but no enterprise. I used to tell her so, and she did not like it."

"But it is not given to everyone to have the chance of self-demonstration," objected Mrs. Dameril. "Some look for it in vain. You have made a name and a fontune as a capable and billiant engineer; you are qualified to speak, certainly; but remember your chance came to you unsought, and your only merit lies in having recognized it and made the most of it."

"That is so," he assented, "but I believe that at least one chance comes to everyone. Many people are too blind or too apathetic, or too cawardly to take it."

"I fancy I should seize it if it came to me," said Mrs Damrell quickly, "but women have fewer chances than men, I am sure. In what way would success command your admiration for a woman?"

"In many ways. hTere is the gift of song, of dramatic power, the success of the artist, the authoress. Take now, for instance, this book that everyonce is tal dkolf. ging xzfffffff