

Mrs Carryl (laughing): O, say, that's bright!

Lancing: But you're ever so much too charming and delightful a woman to do that.

Mrs. Carryl (giving in instantly): O, well, my dear boy, go right ahead if you think it'll do you good. You've captured my Port Arthur.

Lancing: You're a Briton notwithstanding the "Mayflower". And if I didn't adore Julie, if I hadn't laid all my heart at Julie's feet, I would place it with all my family armour at yours. Armour's the only thing I've got to offer.

Mrs. Carryl: . . . And so you love Julie, eh? Well, I never.

Lancing: Good Lord, you're not surprised. Just as though, being a man, I could do anything else. I loved her in America. I adored her on the ship, I've nearly gone off my head since she's been here, and now—

Mrs. Carryl: In fact, you've gone clean off. Very well, then, as her mother, I must just put one or two questions to you before I can give you permission to speak to her. Her poppa, bless his dear old heart, was a business man. He would have liked me to do so.

Lancing (with a dull level tone): My name is Roden Francis Altamont Alexander Paton Altamont, commonly called Lord Lancing. I am the twenty seventh joke who has been commonly called so.

Mrs. Carryl (a little dazed): Swaggerly called so, I should say.

Lancing (gratefully): Thank you. I am described as a Peer of Great Britain, of the Roden Court in the County of Hampshire, of the Bachelor's, Beef-steak, White's Boodles and the Turf. Motto, "Hands clenched" lion or chanticleer rampant—I mean—

Mrs. Carryl (quickly): That's all right Lord Lancing. Don't dip further into such painful details. er—excuse me being personal—what about your banking account?

Lancing (eagerly): O, that's quite all right. I never worry about that.

Mrs. Carryl: Is that so?

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Lancing: Yes. It's a ripping account. Either it's hopelessly overdrawn or it hasn't got enough in it to worry about.

Mrs. Carryl (laughing): I'm still pleased.

Lancing: For all that, for a Peer, I have lots of things to offer. Unlike most, I've never been through the Bankruptcy and Divorce Courts.

Mrs. Carryl: You don't say.

Lancing: I have never made the acquaintance of Bow Street or been in the Grenadier Guards. Don't think I'm bucking, but you are auditing my accounts. I wish you to give all the attention you can to the credit side.

Mrs. Carryl: Why, certainly.

Lancing: I have never been within a hundred yards of the Gaiety stage door, and, although I have suffered from most of the juvenile illnesses, pantomania is a stranger to me.

Mrs. Carryl (with a long sigh of relief): Lord Lancing, say no more. Put your are quite close to me. I want to whisper. Julie has just come into the room. Don't move! What would you like me to do?

Lancing: Get out, quick! I mean—

Mrs. Carryl (laughing quietly): I know: don't explain. That's how I like a man to put it. Julie!

Julie: Yes, mamma.

Mrs. Carryl: Here's Lord Lancing. Just tell him of all the nice things you've been buying for Christmas, while I go and write a few cheques.

(She goes quickly out of the room. Angels' mothers are sometimes—though rarely—angels too.)

Lancing (on his feet trembling horribly): H—how de do, Miss Julie?

Julie (with something fluttering in her throat): H—how do you do, Lord Lancing?

(Follows a pause).

COSMO HAMILTON.