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laid the table with their prettiest china and silver, tucked the children into their dainty beds earlier than usual, that she might give herself only to Ned this evening.

When she had convinced herself that the dinner was going on properly, she went to her room to make a more elaborate toilet. As she brushed her hair she surveyed herself in the mirror critically, soliloquizing, "I really don't look like the girl I was five years ago, with these dark circles around my eyes, my color gone, and my hair devoid of its fluffiness; Ned always used to rave about my hair. Well, my eyes seem the only unchanged thing about me."

From her wardrobe she selected a frock of soft blue material, which Ned had often admired in the old days, now, although sadly out of fashion, was still very becoming, and it was a pleasing figure that awaited the home-coming of her husband that evening.

Mydra felt restless and as the minutes flew past without bringing Ned, she wandered back and forth between the kitchen and living room.

"The dinner will be quite spoiled," she said mournfully, "and if he does not hurry I'll forget my little speeches, and lose my courage."

Her good spirits were ebbing fast when steps sounded upon the verandah and were followed by a knock at the door. Mydra started, then thinking that Ned must have forgotten his latch-key, hastened to open the door without turning on the porch light.

"Good evening, Mrs. Ned," said a voice before Mrs. Shorey had time to notice that the man was not her husband. "Good evening," she returned chillily, then in a moment, as the light fell on the man's face, she held out her hand, exclaiming happily: "Why Lance Drew, where did you drop from? Such a surprise! Are you directly from home? Have you seen Ned?"

"Well, Mydra, if you let me sit down I may find time to answer a few of your questions," said Lance Drew, smiling, then they both laughed as she showed him into the little living room and began still farther to ply him with questions concerning the dear friends in their distant native town, from which he had just come.

"Where is Ned, Mydra?" He managed to ask when a pause in the conversation gave him an opportunity.

"Oh, he hasn't come home for dinner yet, although I have been expecting him for an hour," was the reply, "I really thought you were he."

"I had his business address and called there before coming here but he had left the office, so I fully expected to find him at home," said Mr. Drew.

The conversation turned again to old friends, and they were so engrossed recounting and laughing over youthful experiences that Ned had entered the house before they were aware of his presence.

He caught a glimpse of the especially pretty dinner table and was prepared to see his wife entertaining visitors, but Mr. Drew's back was toward the door and he could not think to whom Mydra could be talking with such animation and evident pleasure.

"Who the dickens is he?" thought Ned, but was left no time in doubt, as his wife, turning, noticed him and came to meet him.

It was the old happy Mydra who smiled and drew him into the room, saying: "You are late, Ned, see whom we have here." "Well, I'll be blest! Lance, old boy, how are you?" "Capital, capital, Ned. How are you yourself?" And the pleasure of the two friends was genuine.

Mydra left them to themselves and slipped out to serve the dinner, congratulating herself on having such a well arranged meal to offer their unexpected guest.

She peeped into the little mirror over the sink to assure herself that she was looking as well as she might.

"I wouldn't have Lance guess for the world how unhappy I have been, or that Ned and I have been living in such indifference," and through the meal, and the hours which followed, she seemed the personification of happiness. Ned watched her furtively as she talked with their guest and his thoughts were a confusion of old memories and lately lived scenes. "Mydra looks like my old sweet-

heart to-night, I haven't heard her laugh so much for an age," he reflected, then an idea flashed into his mind, and his face took on a scowl. "Perhaps she's been regretting her choice all this time. She may have been sorry that she let Lance go for me. What else could her actions and this sudden change mean? Fool that I've been," he mused bitterly, and once the serpent of suspicion had entered his mind there was plenty of work for him and Ned's brow grew darker. Mydra had risen and was evidently looking out a piece of music while Lance opened the piano. "She hasn't touched the piano for weeks before," sneered Ned to himself, but he started with a feeling of guilt when Mydra said sweetly, "Come, Ned, let us have some music? (Lance wants to hear some of those duets which we used to sing at home so much.)"

"Come along old fellow, let's hear if matrimony has spoiled your voice," enjoined Mr. Drew, smiling and drawing his friend up to the instrument.

Ned rose reluctantly, but the smooth running notes of the accompaniment, played by his wife, helped to dispel the bitter thoughts, and he soon was absorbed in the peaceful atmosphere created by the music.

When it was over he had regained his complacency and his distrust had gone, so it was a good natured host that bade his old chum good-night and good-bye at the car.

"It did seem good to see Lance again, didn't it?" said Mydra when they were alone. "It surely did. It brought old times back again all right. Well, it's late. I am going to bed. Good-night, Mydra." "Good-night Ned. I want to tidy things a bit," answered Mydra slowly, as Ned went up stairs.

She began to remove all signs of their little feast but her gaiety had left her and the old listlessness returned.

"My plans and resolutions came to naught," she sighed, "and I wanted to make a new beginning so badly, but Ned seemed unconscious of any effort on my part, and, oh, dear," her head fell upon the table and she gave herself up to tears.

Ned's thoughts were busy also; he was possessed with a spirit of unrest. He wanted to have this thing out with Mydra but didn't know how to begin. He took off his shoes and coat but could decide on no definite action. With the ostensible purpose of getting something from his overcoat pocket in the hall, he came downstairs again, quietly and hesitatingly, and was surprised to see Mydra, who so lately had been in such radiant spirits, a picture of woe.

"What's the matter, Mydra?" he asked kindly, going to her side and laying his hand on her shoulder. "Oh! You startled me Ned!" she exclaimed, but quickly dropped her head again without answering his question.

"Tell me, Mydra, what's bothering you? Are you ill, or what is it?"

She raised her head but kept her eyes away from him as she answered, evasively:

"Oh I was only feeling blue over a disappointment I've had."

Ned groaned. "It is just as I feared," he thought, suspicions arising more formidably than before. He determined to know the worst, however, and set about it diplomatically.

"That was a rattling good dinner you had for Drew to-night, Mydra." She gave him a quick queer look, then a smile overspread her face as she rejoined quickly:

"Oh, Ned, are you sure?"

Ned's heart began to soar. "Liked it; well I guess, it would be a funny fellow who wouldn't appreciate such a dinner as that was and served by such a pretty little woman in a love of a blue frock."

"I am so glad," she said happily and poor Ned was further puzzled as she put her arms about his neck and again began to cry.

"Well, that is a great way to act glad. What is all this about?" He held her and waited. "Come, I must know."

"Ned—" "Yes, Mydra—" "Do you know what day this is? It is our fifth anniversary and I was feeling grieved because we seemed so much less to each other than we did five years ago, and because we seemed to be living in such a state of indifference that I thought you did not care for me any

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