

from another and throwing the old one away, "he must be pretty lonely all by himself in that big house of his. On top of that he's getting old and is n't in very good health. Explain it any way you like. The simple fact is that within this last year or so, it's gradually gotten to be a kind of obsession with him, an out-and-out, down-and-out monomania, to know that kid — to have her come and spend part of every year with him. That's natural, too, I should say."

"H'm. Mrs. Carstairs sticks to her like fly-paper, I suppose?"

"Not at all. She admits Uncle Elbert's rights and is entirely willing to let him have Mary — for such is our little heroine's name — for part of the time. It is the child who is doing the fly-paper business. The painful fact is that she declines to have anything whatever to do with her father. Invitations, commands, entreaties — she spurns them all. Yes, I asked him if they had tried spanking, but he did n't answer — seemed rather miffed, in fact. The child simply will not come, and that is point number one. Now, of course, Uncle Elbert realizes that he has not been what the world would call a good father. And he has figured it out that Mary, evidently a young precocity, has judged him, found him guilty, and sentenced him to banishment from her affections. That hurts, you know. Well, he is certain that if he could once see her and be thrown with her for a few days, she would find that he is not such an old ogre, after all, would take him back as a father, as we might say, and that after that everything would be plain sailing. That's

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