

How Two Learned a Lesson.

Betty sighed. Now why should she have sighed at this particular moment no one on earth could tell. And it was all the more explicable because John had just generally put into her little shapely hand a brand new ten dollar bill. And here began the trouble.

"What's the matter?" he said, his face falling at the faint sound, and his mouth clapping together in what those who knew him best called an "obstinate pucker." "Now what is it?" Betty who had just begun to change the tight into a merry little laugh rippling all over the corners of her red lips, stopped suddenly, tossed her head and, with a small jerk no way concealing, sent out the words— "You needn't insinuate, John, that I'm always troublesome!"

"I didn't insinuate—who's talking of insinuating?" he said, thoroughly incensed at the very idea, and backing away a few steps, he glanced down from his tremendous height in extreme irritation. "If you yourself that's forever insinuating and all that, and then for you to put it on me—it's really abominable!"

The voice was harsh, and the eyes that looked down into hers were not pleasant to behold. "And if you think, John Peabody, that I'll stand and have such things said to me, you miss your guess—that all I'll do is to give you a good spanking!"

previous, Miss Elvira Simmons had made the very most of her opportunities, and by dint of making great parade over helping her in some domestic work, such as house-keeping, dressmaking and the like, the maiden lady had managed to ply her other vocation, that of newsgatherer, at one and the same time, pretty effectually.

She always called her by her first name, though Betty resented it; and she was a great handle of her friendship on every occasion, making John rage violently and vow a thousand times the "old maid" should walk!

But she never had—and now—scouting dimly, like a cartoon after its prey, that trouble might come to the pretty little white house, the mock-mischief had come to do her work, if devastation had really commenced.

"Been crying?" she said, more plainly than politely, and sinking down into the pretty chintz-covered rocking chair with an air that showed she meant to stay, and made the chair creak fearfully. "Only folks do say that you and your husband don't live happily—but I wouldn't mind—I know that's your fault!"

Betty's heart stood still. Had it come to this! John and she not to live happily! To be sure they didn't, as she remembered with a pang the dreadful scene of words and hot tempers; but had it gotten around so often as to be everybody's mouth? With all her distress of mind she was forced to go on.

"An' I tell folks so," she said, looking herself back and forth to witness the effect of her words, "when they get to talkin', so you can't blame me if things don't go away for 'em, sure!" "You tell folks so?" repeated Betty, vaguely, and standing quite still.

"What I don't understand you." "Why, that the blame is all 'mine,'" cried the old maid, exasperated at her strange mood and her dulness. "I say, I say, I say, why couldn't no one live with him, let alone that pretty wife he's got. That's what I say, Betty. And then, I tell 'em what a queer man he is, how cross, and—"

"And you dare to tell people such things of my husband?" cried Betty, drawing herself up to her extremest height, and towering so over the old woman in the chair that she jumped in confusion at the storm she had raised, and stared blindly into the blazing eyes and face rosy with indignation—her only thought was how to get away from the storm she had raised, but could not stop. But she was forced to stay.

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