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HAZEL'S SUIT CASE

By Miriam Foster

Hazel Huttington paid her bill at the desk of the Windsor Hotel, and then turning to the clerk, said: "Do you know of anyone who will carry my suitcase to the depot?" "The chap over there," answered the young man, pointing to one on the other side of the spacious lobby. "Thank you." Then walking toward a great, big, stalwart fellow who looked at the girl with a surprised air as she spoke, she asked him: "Will you take by bag to the W. & Y. station immediately?" He hesitated for a fraction of a section, and then nodded his head. "Yes; where is it?" "Over at the desk with the monogram A. R. on it. Please be quick about it. There is no time to lose." The young man grabbed the suit case with a vigor as if his whole future existence depended upon his making a little extra money and followed Hazel down the street, catching up to the girl, who was

neatly attired all in brown from head to foot. He commenced in a genial tone: "That building over there is the new library, and that—" "I beg your pardon," replied Hazel, without looking up from the time table she held in her hand. "I asked for a porter, not a guide." "Oh, I won't charge anything extra for a little information," persisted the young man, as he went on to tell about the different land marks as they passed them; and Hazel found herself against her will listening to him. As they approached the train Hazel started to take her suit case. "No, miss, I'll take it right into the car. It's too heavy for you to carry," he insisted. Finally when the engine started to whistle "all aboard," Hazel handed him fifty cents. "Much obliged, miss," Laurence said, taking the coin. "This is the first money I've earned to-day." Then the car sped on, but Hazel's thoughts would constantly turn to the splendid appearing fellow with the earnest face and quizzical smile. "Not one of our set to compare with him," she admitted to herself. "In looks or manners." A few months later Hazel was seated in her pretty little room, a

room which, like its occupant, was expressive of refinement and good taste, when her friend Elsie came in full of suppressed excitement. "What's the news?" asked Hazel. "You'll never guess. It's so seldom anything new occurs here. Laurence Curran is coming home from college with brother James." "Who's he?" "He's Millionaire Curran's son, though he's a great disappointment to his father, and he's rather plebeian in tastes, and doesn't care a rap for society. All his sympathies are for the working classes." "Why do you deny knowing him?" "How dare you doubt my word? I've never seen or even heard of him." "Only because," began Elsie apologetically, "Marie said she caught a glimpse of you two together last summer in Philadelphia." "You misunderstood her, that's all," said Hazel, dismissing the subject. When Elsie related the above conversation Marie was nonplussed. "Such deceit, duplicity, hypocrisy," she ejaculated. "Am I confounding facts with fancies when I tell you that Hazel left for the West a day sooner than we did, after we'd been away for a three weeks' trip? She

said distinctly enough when we bid her good-by, 'I'm glad to get out of this town. I don't know a single soul except you girls,' then later, when we went in a sight-seeing car we saw her walking with Laurence, who carried her bag as if there was nothing in the world he liked to do half so well."

"Didn't she see you?" "No, our faces were masked in automobile veils; besides they were too much engrossed in conversation." "Rather odd, isn't it? Maybe they're secretly engaged or have some good reason for being so mysterious."

"Well, the mystery will solve itself when Laurence appears." "Marie," confided Elsie the next time they met. "Laurence never even moved a muscle when I mentioned her name. I can't appear too inquisitive, as he's our guest. But when you meet him, can't you make some reference to the Quaker City?"

The opportunity never offered itself. The next morning bright and early Laurence was up strolling about the pretty little town as if he was searching for some elusive thing. Evidently he was unsuccessful, for he returned later looking glum and disconcerted. Elsie tried all in her limited power to entertain the young man, but could not even bring a smile from him. Only a vague "yes" and "no" was received in answer to every remark.

Suddenly Laurence jumped to his feet and rushed to the window. "Who's that girl over there?" he asked in mingled tones of astonishment and joy.

"Which one?" questioned Elsie. "The one in brown," he answered impatiently; "with pretty auburn hair."

"Hazel Huttington. Don't you know her?" "No," answered Laurence, watching the girl intently. "But I'd give all and more than I possess to meet her. I've had some visions of her ever since last summer," he said, looking out rapturously. "She's coming right here."

Elsie was too bewildered to answer and only recovered her composure as Hazel entered and gave Laurence a look of recognition.

"I think we've met before," commenced Laurence, as he extended his hand and gave her a look that spoke volumes.

"We surely have," replied the pretty girl. "But under vastly different circumstances."

"Then why did you say you weren't acquainted?" Elsie couldn't refrain from asking.

"I knew Miss Huttington by sight, but not my name. Our friend discovered me last summer and I've been hunting for a trace of her in nearly every town in Pennsylvania since 'then," exclaimed Laurence, as he went on to say how Hazel had mistaken him for a porter.

"I had by doubts all the time when we were walking to the depot," confessed Hazel. "Didn't you notice that I took you the long way around?"

"Yes, but I didn't mind that; I rather wished it was longer," laughed Hazel. "But I nearly missed my train, and I feared you weren't paid enough for your services."

"Plenty," answered Laurence, thinking that the girl was a hundred times prettier than he even remembered her to be. "I still have that half dollar, though I've spent much more trying to find a girl of medium height with blue eyes and auburn hair and whose initials were A. R."

"Oh, that's the reason you couldn't," laughed Hazel. "The monogram on that suit case was my cousin's. I carried her's because it was a more convenient size than mine."

"Will you excuse me for a moment?" said Elsie. She thought she would not be missed while she telephoned to Marie that Hazel was not engaged secretly to Laurence, but she had no doubt she would be soon.

(The end)

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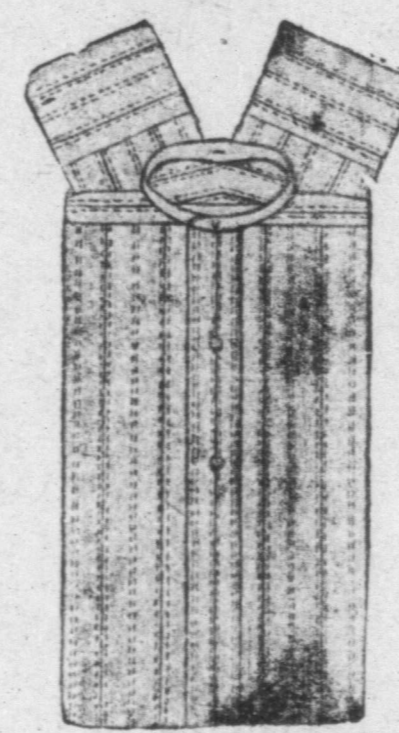
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