

CHAPTER II -Frivolous Cupid

At Colonel Holborow's cozy gathering, filled with bachelors save for himself, the conversation turned to the personal tales behind each man's unmarried state. Amid shared stories, Jack Dexter's narrative stood out for its dramatic and humorous recounting of a chased romance, entangled in mistaken identities and thwarted affections. Dexter's tale begins with his pursuit of Lady Mary Fitzmoine, hindered by her mother, the Duchess of Medmenham, who deems Dexter an unsuitable match. Determined, Dexter follows Lady Mary to Switzerland, where a series of comical errors unfolds.

At an inn in a quiet village, Dexter's efforts to secretly connect with Lady Mary are sabotaged by a case of mistaken identity. A note intended for another man, marked simply "M," leads Dexter to believe Lady Mary reciprocates his feelings and wishes to meet. However, the note's real recipient was meant to be another guest expected at the inn. Dexter's misadventures culminate in a hilariously awkward moment when, attempting to steal a kiss from who he believes is Lady Mary, he discovers he has kissed a stranger, drawing attention from onlookers including Lady Mary and her chaperone, Miss Dibbs.

The ensuing chaos and misunderstandings result in a comedic but crushing blow to Dexter's romantic aspirations. Lady Mary, witnessing Dexter's misguided display of affection towards another woman, severs their acquaintance with icy finality. As Dexter tries to salvage his dignity, more mishaps follow, including a confrontation and the revelation of the mysterious lady in blue's true intentions, culminating in a humorous reflection on the precarious nature of love and mistaken identity.

Dexter's story, relayed with a mix of humor and regret, serves as a cautionary tale against hasty judgments and the perils of pursuing love under false pretenses. Despite the jovial setting, Dexter's narrative exposes the fragile balance between love,

reputation, and the societal expectations that govern romantic liaisons, leaving his audience amused yet contemplative about their own stances on marriage and the unforeseen challenges that come with it.

