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It Happened To Me

THE LASHES OF REJECTION

Written for "The Listener"
by A. FLAT

ALL my life I've longed to have long eyelashes.

Once I asked a cousin who was a student if anything could be done about it.

"What for?"

"You know quite well."

"No more of your tricks," he warned.

But one day I saw a shopgirl with a pair of wonderful lashes. At first I merely admired, but when she was joined by another girl with equally splendid lashes I began to wonder.

I said to the shopman: "Do you pick your girls for their fine lashes?"

"Um," he said, "I think they get them out of a box."

At the first opportunity I edged along and murmured "Where did you get them?"

The Last Pair

Soon I was in a chair having a pair tried on. They were the last pair, I was told. No more were to be imported, apparently on the ground that they might serve a subversive purpose by luring the Home Guard from their duties. The job finished, I rushed to the mirror. You can't believe what these lashes did for me! My eyes had become wells of mystery, witchery and trickery. But what had happened to my hat? You may have imagined that milliners' imaginations could not riot any more than they have rioted already; but you're mistaken. My hat had taken on a shape never before imagined and an air quite undefinable.

It added just that touch of *diablerie* that was needed.

Delighted, I flew down flights of stairs and at the bottom collided with a masculine figure. I caught a gleam of admiration, but I was gone! I catapulted out the door and there was a man driving a car. I directed the full battery of those eyelashes upon him and he dashed into a pole and the pole fell into a shop window.

I Meet George

But I sped on my *femme fatale* progress, doing everything with those lashes that could be done—sweepings upward, flutterings down, and roguish side-longs. While doing one of the latter I crashed into a nice tweed suit. I stopped dead and looked wistful. He looked as if he had lived in clean country air and knew a lot about sheep but little about women, and what cats and sinks of iniquity they are. He had a distracted, fretted air, but this changed to a look of grim resolve.

"Will you come and have a drink?"

Oh, my Victorian ancestors! But I fought them all and went!

The lounge was deserted save for a small, mild woman whom I would have



"...I may be dull, but I am respectable!"

expected to see sitting at home drinking tea, not ordering beer. The waiter was a dignified dorky, and I had a delightful feeling as if I were somebody out of "Gone with the Wind." I dangled slim legs nonchalantly but guardedly, for I knew my silk stockings had more than one run not too well mended.

His Wife Did It

George (I call him that, for it suited him—knowing nothing to the contrary I look on all Georges as honest and pleasant)—well, George seemed to have sunk into a deep depression, but he emerged with—"My wife has driven me to this!"

"What!"

"Taking up with a woman of doubtful character."

"Who?"

"You!"

"Me! I may be dull, but I am respectable!"

"You don't look it," said George wearily.

"It's the eyelashes," I began tearfully, "and they are due to an inferiority complex augmented by *The Listener* and—"

"Listener! Where is he? I'll teach him to listen!" There was red in George's eye, so I said soothingly, "*The Listener* is an it. There is a he—an editor—but he is in Wellington, rejecting and occasionally—oh, very occasionally—accepting manuscripts."

This had a hypnotic effect on George, but he rallied.

"Do you know my wife has no time for me!"

"And he has no time for me!"

"I believe she'll take up with that white-livered William."

"He's already taken up with half-a-dozen hussies."

"Do you know," he continued darkly, "there are times when I've thought of blowing out my brains!"

"Oh," I cried hopefully. "Do you think you could? *The Listener*—"

"There are times," George went on still more darkly, "when I've thought of sowing my wild oats."

"Well," I said doubtfully, "they've had that already. Perhaps it's hardly worthwhile unless you could really do something outstanding—something new."

But this George was apparently unable to do, so he ordered more drinks.

Five Georges

After a while it seemed to me that George had grown hydra-headed. He seemed to have at least five heads—all talking. I was having no innings but I brightened. I remembered that I too knew a Browning quotation!

Laying a finger on one of the many Georges I said kindly but firmly, "Who fished the murex up? What porridge had John Keats?"

But George didn't know and didn't care.

So there we sat, linked in a common adversity—he with an unappreciative wife, and I with an unappreciative editor—quietly and sorrowfully, when we were startled by a sharp cry.

I looked up.

George looked up.

She had quite good eyelashes, but her eyes were glassy with staring.

She looked at me as if I were the serpent of Old Nick.

She looked at George, proud of port (backed by sherry), and defiant of mien. She wilted, cried "George," and fell into his arms.

Her companion was not even the white-livered William but just another

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