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No. 16

FRENCH'S AMERICAN ACTING EDITION

A Doubtful Victory

Or

Love's Stratagem

A Farce in One Act

By

FRANK DUMONT

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NEW YORK
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Love's Stratagem

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By

FRANK DUMONT

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A Doubtful Victory.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

- MR. ADAM DUCKFIT *a hen-pecked husband.*
MRS. DUCKFIT *a suffragette and woman of
determination.*
ESTELLE DUCKFIT *a young lady much in love.*
HAROLD HOBBS *engaged to Estelle.*
-

COSTUMES.

Modern, for street or house.

TMP 96-007220

A Doubtful Victory.

SCENE.—*A handsome interior with doors in flats. Handsome furniture arranged around the room. Rugs. Centre table with lamp. Piano. Tête-à-tête, and articles of bric-à-brac arranged. Music for opening.*

(Enter MR. and MRS. DUCKFIT, L., quarreling)

MRS. DUCKFIT. We may as well settle it now as any other time. I will be mistress of this house.

MR. DUCKFIT. And I'll be the master of it, madam. When I married you I didn't sign away all my rights.

MRS. DUCKFIT. Nor did I. You can talk as much as you please but I will have my own way in everything.

MR. DUCKFIT. And so will I. I am going to the lodge to-night.

MRS. DUCKFIT. And I am going to a suffragette meeting. Oh! I can give them some points on happy married life.

MR. DUCKFIT. And so can I. Oh! If I was a single man again —

MRS. DUCKFIT. Oh, if I were but single I'd like to see the man who would inveigle me into the meshes of matrimony. Nay, nay, Pauline—not any more for mine.

MR. DUCKFIT. That's nice slang, isn't it? Nay, nay, Pauline. You want to let our daughter hear that?

MRS. DUCKFIT. She'll hear worse from you if your feeble attempts at liberty are not crushed at once. I'm going to the meeting.

MR. DUCKFIT. All right—go! I'm not detaining you. I'm going to the lodge.

MRS. DUCKFIT. What time do you propose coming home?

MR. DUCKFIT. I don't know. What time will you return?

MRS. DUCKFIT. I don't know. I may have business of importance to transact after the meeting is over, for you know I am the secretary.

MR. DUCKFIT. And I am the master of our lodge.

MRS. DUCKFIT. (*sneers*) It's the only place where you are the master.

MR. DUCKFIT. It's the only place I care to be.

MRS. DUCKFIT. And I want to say a few words to Estelle. I don't want that young man Harold around here any more.

MR. DUCKFIT. He seems to be a nice young man.

MRS. DUCKFIT. Yes—of your kind! I tell you I won't have him calling on my daughter.

MR. DUCKFIT. My daughter as much as your daughter.

MRS. DUCKFIT. Well, I don't want him hanging around this house. I'll pick out a husband for her if she needs one.

MR. DUCKFIT. And so will I!

MRS. DUCKFIT. And so you won't! There's where we lock horns again! I'll give Estelle her instructions at once. No more Harolds!

MR. DUCKFIT. All right—let her get who she pleases.

MRS. DUCKFIT. No, indeed! Whom I please to select and no other. Well, I can't stay here talking to you all night. I've got to get dressed.

MR. DUCKFIT. Leave me my trousers, please!

MRS. DUCKFIT. Oh, you get out! Remember, if you're not home by eleven o'clock I'll come after you.

MR. DUCKFIT. And if you're not home by half-past ten I'll come after you! (*she exits, slamming the door, L.*) I'll get ready to skip out myself and get an hour's freedom and real liberty. Oh! why did I ever marry a strong minded woman?
(*Exits, R.*)

(*Enter ESTELLE DUCKFIT, L. U. E., weeping*)

ESTELLE. I think it's a shame that I can't pick out a sweetheart to suit myself. Ma hates Harold and pa pretends to like him just to be contrary and spite ma. I don't know how it's going to end. I've got my orders to give him the mitten, or in other words his walking papers.

(*Enter HAROLD HOBBS, C. D., joyfully*)

HAROLD. Hello, little girl! Traces of tears on your pretty cheeks. What's up?

ESTELLE. Ma says I must never see you again.

HAROLD. All right! Turn down the light and you won't see me.

ESTELLE. You don't comprehend! You're out of the race. You are dismissed.

HAROLD. What! Thrown down? Who's the other guy?

ESTELLE. Don't be slangy, please! There is no other guy! Ma doesn't like you.

HAROLD. Well, I don't want to marry your mother.

ESTELLE. And pa doesn't like you.

HAROLD. He tried to borrow money from me, and I didn't have it—that's the reason.

ESTELLE. Stop joking! This is very serious—to me.

(*HAROLD puts arm around her*)

HAROLD. And it's very serious to me. Just as I won you out, too. Now there must be some other fellow in this.

ESTELLE. Harold! Don't forget yourself.

HAROLD. Well, don't you forget me. (*kicks his hat*) I've got blood in my eye.

ESTELLE. Good-bye! Our love dream is at an end! Here's your ring! (*gives it*)

HAROLD. And here's your locket with your picture in it. (*takes it off watch chain and gives it to her*)

ESTELLE. Of course I can't give you back all the ice cream and theatre tickets you gave me.

HAROLD. No, I don't expect them. But you might give me back all the presents I promised you.

ESTELLE. Don't be silly! This is serious because it is ma's orders. Wait! *(runs out L.)*

HAROLD. This is pretty tough! I win a fine girl only to lose her because her ma doesn't like me. I don't think I want to marry into this kind of a family, anyway.

(Enter ESTELLE with piles of letters all tied up with ribbons. Piles them in HAROLD'S arms)

ESTELLE. Here are your letters!

HAROLD. Is that all I ever wrote you?

ESTELLE. That's all I could find. I may have a few more around somewhere.

HAROLD. Well, don't look for them. I'll send the junk man around after these to-morrow.

ESTELLE. Good-bye, Harold. We part forever.

HAROLD. Good-bye, Estelle. I'm going down to the corner to drink ten bottles of soda water to drown my sorrow. *(runs out)*

ESTELLE. Oh! It's awful to be broken-hearted. I think I'll write a note to Harold and we'll elope. That's the only way I can see out of this difficulty. *(weeps)* Oh, father! Oh, mother! My dream of love is o'er—until to-morrow.

(Enter MR. DUCKFIT, R.)

MR. DUCKFIT. What's the matter, daughter?

ESTELLE. Ma says I'll never, never marry Harold and she has ordered me to drive him out. She says she is boss of this house and will never give her consent.

MR. DUCKFIT. Is that so? We'll see about this! I'll give my consent anyway. You tell Harold I said so. Now don't cry. I'll be back in a few moments. *(pats her cheeks and kisses her brow)* We'll see who is master here. *(Exits, C. D.)*

(Enter MRS. DUCKFIT, L.)

MRS. DUCKFIT. Who was that speaking to you just now—not that scapegrace Harold, was it?

ESTELLE. No, it was pa!

MRS. DUCKFIT. That old fool is always gabbling around.

ESTELLE. He's very mad indeed! He says Harold must never enter this house again. He says he'll never, never consent to our marriage and that what he says "goes."

MRS. DUCKFIT. What *he* says goes? (*laughs*) And *he* won't consent to your marriage with Harold? *He* won't, eh? Well, I like his impudence. What has he got to do with it?

ESTELLE. It's only to spite you, ma!

MRS. DUCKFIT. Well, I'll show him who is boss here. Now you *will* marry Harold.

(ESTELLE *secretly laughs*)

ESTELLE. But what about pa?

MRS. DUCKFIT. I say you shall—and that ends it. You will marry Harold. I consent to it. Now, Mr. Duckfit, do your worst! (*laughs*) I've fixed you this time.

ESTELLE. Oh, ma! I'm so happy.

MRS. DUCKFIT. And so am I, getting the best of your father!

(*Enter* HAROLD, C. D., *and is about to run out.* ESTELLE *checks him*)

ESTELLE. Wait, Harold! It's all right. Give me back my ring. Take your locket. (*bus.*)

HAROLD. Why, what has happened?

MRS. DUCKFIT. Nothing! When I say a thing I mean it. Mr. Duckfit thought to spite me in refusing his consent to your marriage with Estelle, but I say it shall take place. I am a suffragette and I'm never bluffed!

(*Enter* MR. DUCKFIT, D. C.)

MR. DUCKFIT. Well, is it fixed?

MRS. DUCKFIT. Yes, it's fixed, you old meddler. I've given my consent.

MR. DUCKFIT. Hurrah! I thought you would.

MRS. DUCKFIT. Yes, and it's a great victory for me.

MR. DUCKFIT. And a bully victory for me. I consent!

MRS. DUCKFIT. You may as well, for *I* have said they *shall* marry—see?

MR. DUCKFIT. Bully for you! It's a great victory for me.

ESTELLE. And a great victory for me. (*aside to HAROLD*) Don't say anything to spoil it.

HAROLD. Pa and ma, your blessing!

MRS. DUCKFIT. (*pushes MR. DUCKFIT away*) I'll give mine first. (*blesses them*)

MR. DUCKFIT. And you can have mine. (*aside*) We've won her over!

ESTELLE. A little stratagem, but it worked all right. Your hand, Harold!

(*They join hands. "Wedding march" by orchestra as they march up. MR. DUCKFIT R., MRS. DUCKFIT L., both sneering at each other as if they had won a great battle and bested each other in the contest*)

CURTAIN.

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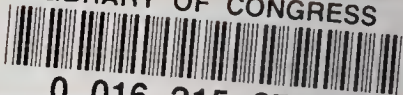
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