

PAULA FERRIS

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Paula Ferris by Mary Farley Sanborn

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MARY FARLEY SANBORN

PAULA FERRIS

BY MARY FARLEY SANBORN.

SWEET AND TWENTY . . . A Novel.

IT CAME TO PASS . . . A Novel.

PAULA FERRIS A Novel.

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PAULA FERRIS

BY

MARY FARLEY ^{Sanborn} SANBORN

AUTHOR OF "SWEET AND TWENTY" "IT CAME TO PASS" ETC.



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PAULA FERRIS

CHAPTER I

AN INFORMAL TEA

A STRIP of pale yellow sky extended along the horizon where the cold, gray cloud had lifted. There had been a flurry of fine, dry snow which the wind had driven into little heaps on the sidewalk; a few flakes were still spinning about in the crisp air. It was near night, and indeed past sunset; it was growing piercingly cold, and Mrs. Ferris shivered as she closed the front door upon the last of her afternoon guests, and hurried back to the parlor.

The chandeliers were already lighted; and in the library, at the rear of the larger apartment, an open wood-fire was burning briskly, casting a cheerful, dancing gleam on walls, pictures, and furniture. The parlor was in confusion. Groups of chairs and tables were huddled together, the latter being strewn with playing-cards hastily thrown down. A woman sat by one of them with her elbow resting upon it, and her chin supported in her hand; with one finger-

tip she was absently rubbing a tiny scratch on the polished surface of the table.

"Are you disappointed because you did not get the prize, Olive?" said Mrs. Ferris, with a laugh.

The woman drew a long breath, as she roused herself, and began slowly gathering up the cards one by one. Her absent expression changed to one of active discontent.

"Well, the cup and saucer were certainly very pretty, and different from anything I have ever seen. I did not care for the tray; but it does vex me beyond everything to have such wretched luck as I had this afternoon. Did you hear what Mrs. Garrowell said to me just after we had finished the last hand? She said, 'My dear Mrs. Goring, if you had responded to my call for trumps, we should have made two more points.' Did you ever hear such insolence from a woman who is capable of leading three aces in succession?"

Mrs. Ferris was standing near her friend, and looking down at her with a smile on her warm, curved lips, and in her soft, bright brown eyes. As she listened, one hand was slowly stroking her hair up from the nape of her slender neck. The hair was of a reddish brown, and so curly as to be almost unmanageable. It would never twist smooth, but would break loose about her face from the thick parting to the small ear that was half out of sight under the crisp waves. Her forehead was very low, and the delicate eyebrows so arched as to lend an expression of childlike wonder to the whole piquant

