



The Lady's Trial

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· Part 1 ·

Having turned 19 years old only a few days ago, Grace had been hosting her two dearest friends, who were staying over in the guest wing during their visit. To her delight, their parents had left together to head to London, leaving the girls alone in the mansion for the next few days. Well, not completely alone. They had servants, of course.

In an effort to have privacy, they were heading further into the grounds of the estate. The garden was only frequented by the Groundskeeper, who followed a strict schedule. He would not be there in the afternoon, which guaranteed they would be fully alone. Far into the back of the gardens, an area was reserved only for Grace, and with the help of her friends, they had planted roses together. They would be in bloom today, something they were quite excited about.

It was a warm summer afternoon, and due to the numerous flowers, the garden was filled with butterflies, bumblebees, and other critters. The girls even spotted a hedgehog and a rabbit.

Grace, as she often was, had a blue dress adorned with ribbons. Her beautiful, long black hair was tied above her head in intricate braids. It was the envy of all her friends but was highly uncomfortable. The pull on her scalp made her fidget, and she reached for it a few times as she walked with her friends to the most remote side of the gardens.

Ahead of her, there was Grace's younger sister, Phoebe, 18 years old. Like her, she had wavy black hair, albeit a bit curlier. At the time, her hair had been cut short due to a mischief involving a curling iron.

She was running ahead, skipping happily, her green dress waved around in the wind. She tapped her foot and spun around, howling like a wolf. "Aooo — we are the wolves of the forest, howl with me!"

She was being utterly ridiculous, but her sister's energy was hard to despise. A smirk crept on Grace's lips.

Then there was Alice, 20 years old. She had orange curly hair and grey eyes. “Howl? Well... sure, it seems fun. Awwooo —” A sun hat and mesh covered her face, as it usually did, hiding her porcelain skin from the sun. She ran ahead, catching up to Phoebe, and pounced on her. “I’m going to devour you!”

Alice laughed. “But wolves don’t eat each other, silly!”

Finally, Catherine, also 20 years old, was shorter than all of them, with straight brown hair and dark eyes. She was always so confident and direct; the girls naturally regarded her as the voice of reason.

Catherine cautioned, “Playing wolves is hardly proper. We are no longer children and ought to be more ladylike.”

Alice pivoted abruptly and stuck her tongue out at her. “A thousand apologies, Madame Catherine. I forgot your aversion to fun.”

Catherine froze and shook her head. Yet a smirk gradually appeared on her lips.

Grace secretly admired Catherine. She was everything that she hoped to become.

In comparison to her friends, she was rather quiet and meek — An observer — and by observing her friends so attentively, she noticed something peculiar, Catherine and Alice. She could not think of one without thinking of the other. They were inseparable, but even more so on this day.

They approached a secluded area surrounded by tall hedges. It was practically impossible for outsiders to see them there. As they each passed below the arch to the garden patch, they were delighted by the bright roses surrounding them. They each took some time to appreciate the fresh scent of the watered flowers and explored the small garden. A bright yellow rose called to Alice, who immediately obliged. She picked it and skipped to Catherine, placing it on her dress with a delicate touch. The short girl avoided her gaze, embarrassed, but did not reject the gift.

“This touch of colour looks marvellous on you, don’t you agree?” said Alice.

Catherine nodded quietly.

Meanwhile, the sisters pulled out two sheets from the bag they brought and covered the grass with them, giving the group a place to relax without risking damage to their dresses. Her sister, as she usually did, felt a hunger for mischief. “You know, the older gents aren’t here to reprimand us, and we are alone amongst friends. How often does that occur? I suggest we take advantage of it.”

Catherine’s eyes narrowed, and she cautiously approached, laying down on the sheet next to Alice. “I’m afraid to ask... please tell me it’s not something dangerous.”

The young girl giggled, “No — no, not dangerous.”

The older girl was relieved, but a worry remained in her mind. “Then, for goodness’ sake, speak up your mind.”

Alice enthusiastically followed, sitting beside her in a teasing tone. “Yes, please share what you have in your wicked mind, Phoebe.” She reached for Catherine’s hand and interlaced her fingers with hers, almost forcefully.

Catherine’s head turned away, avoiding Alice. Yet now she faced Grace, who noted the soft pinkish hue appearing on Catherine’s cheeks. “How peculiar,” she thought.

“To ease your worries, the game I’m about to suggest is quite old. A tradition, a rite of passage, known under many names. Yet today, I shall refer to it as A Lady’s Trial.”

The girls clapped along in unison, an inside joke that implied the name was overly dramatic. It made Phoebe giggle. She cleared her throat and continued, “The trial is as follows. We shall each take turns. You will be given a question and a dare, and you must choose one of them. Before we begin, you must vow to answer truthfully. If you wish to refuse, you must do the dare instead.”

Grace winced. She played this game with her sister before. She knew her to be a cruel game master, yet she couldn’t help but feel thrilled at the idea of tricking her friends into

participating. A mischievous smile crept on her lips as she raised her hand, “I vow to tell the truth, or fulfil the dare!”

The two older girls turned their gaze to her, puzzled. They didn’t expect her to participate so eagerly. Phoebe and Alice were next, each vowing in turns. They giggled together, their gaze all turning to Catherine, who made herself small. After a long moment of silence, she finally cracked. “Oh — Fine, I vow to answer whatever query, or complete the dare.”

Phoebe exchanged a mischievous smile with Grace. They both knew how scandalous this game might get and were looking forward to testing their limits. Phoebe crawled forward and stared at each girl around her. “Delightful! as the host of this game I shall start. I will now choose one of you to enter the trial. Since it is your birthday, how about you, Grace?”

She nodded. “Gladly”

Her sister paused, reflecting on what she possibly could ask her older sibling. “Have you — no — Hold on, I have better.” She brought her hand to her mouth, lost in a deep reflection. “I got it! The dare, you must eat some grass, and the question; Have you ever stolen anything? If so, what was it?”

“Oh heavens, let’s see, stolen...” Grace took a moment to search her memories, “Ah yes, I did, as most of us likely did. I’ve stolen a book when I was visiting my uncle’s. I’m not sure if they ever noticed it was even missing.”

Catherine’s brow raised. “A book?! What could possibly make you want to steal a book?”

Phoebe smirked and mischievously replied in her stead, “I know this book, actually, it’s the one with the nud—.”

Grace reached for her sister’s mouth and covered it. “Hush now, I’m the one supposed to reveal the truth, aren’t I?”

Alice seemed confused. “You mean nude. But why? Was this a drawing guide?”

The girls turned towards her and froze, surprised at her obliviousness. They exchanged a gaze and chose to quickly move on from the subject.

Grace took over. “Alright, since I answered the question, I shall now choose someone else...” as her gaze drifted across her friend, her sister furiously shook her head, signalling not to choose her. She chuckled and instead locked her eyes on—

“Miss Alice.”

The red-haired girl perked up and exchanged a quick glance with her. Grace smirked and continued, “Who have you exchanged a kiss with? and the dare is — you must show us your petti skirt or... petti pants — whatever is beneath, it doesn’t matter.”

The surrounding girls blushed, and each exchanged a stare with each other. Catherine felt compelled to intervene. “Miss Grace, isn’t that a bit far? I’m sure miss Alice woul—wait what are you...”

To her astonishment, her friend stood up and stretched briefly. She looked around the crowd, and then the sky, as if she was still pondering on which choice to make. Finally, as she examined Catherine’s reaction, her hands gripped her dress. She lifted it, revealing the white laced petti skirt that was beneath it. Phoebe whistled teasingly. She held it up for only a few seconds, but it felt like minutes. Once she was done, she sat down without a word.

Catherine swallowed with difficulty and rubbed her cheeks, who were burning red. “Well, then — never mind. I suppose...”

“It’s my turn to choose now, yes?” said Alice.

Phoebe nodded with a big smile. She was clearly pleased at the direction this game took. The red-haired girl lifted the mesh of her sun hat, and her gaze drifted through the crowd. But it was all an act. It was evident who she would choose. Her gaze stopped on—

“Cath, evidently, I should choose you. You haven’t had a turn yet.”

“I suppose.” Catherine fidgeted on the sheet, adjusting her dress. It was clear the previous event made her quite nervous.

“Let’s see... a question, mm — I can’t think of any. Wait, no.” She leaned towards her friend, almost in a teasing manner, “Have you ever kissed a boy? And dare — show me what’s beneath your dress.”

Catherine’s brow lifted. “Only you, Alice?”

“Hm — I meant us... the group. Yes.” She clasped her hands together, and her eyes shifted.

The brunette’s brow furrowed, and she shook her head, “No, I’ve never kissed—” she paused.

Grace smirked. Catherine was a woman of principles and as such, she would never break rules, even when they would make her say something shameful. Yet, she could not have predicted her answer. The girl rolled her eyes and scoffed, “I’ve never kissed ‘a boy’”.

The emphasis on that last part was obvious, causing all eyes to go wide around her. A silence fell between them. Alice’s eyes darted as she naively asked, “Wait, what would you kiss if not a boy?”

Phoebe whispered, “A girl.”

Grace glanced briefly at her sister, thinking, “why on earth did she know that?”

However, most peculiar was Catherine’s response, and Grace could not let it slide that easily. “Wait, wait, you cannot simply reveal to us something so shocking and not explain it.”

“I answered the question, didn’t I? I’m not to blame if your question was too vague.”

Alice nodded. “Fair enough. Then it is now your turn.”

When the young Grace looked at her red-haired friend, she seemed more nervous than usual. She even went as far as removing her hat and held it close on her lap. Under close examination, the mesh was all tangled, as if she had been fidgeting with it.

Was Alice bothered by the idea of Catherine kissing another girl? Perhaps she could use that in their game.

Phoebe groaned and interrupted her thoughts. She scoffed, “Ugh — fine. Take your turn.”

Catherine already made her choice, “Miss Grace.”

She perked up, as if pulled from a trance. This must be a sign from the gods. One trial and she would gain a powerful tool to answer her questions. “Oh dear, me again? Very well.”

“You seem suspiciously delighted,” accused Catherine. She shook her head and continued, “I find that upsetting, but I’ll do my best to challenge you. You shall feel fear.”

Grace grinned. “Oh~ really?”

“Yes, let’s see how far you can go. You mentioned you stole a book with nude images. Since it mattered so much to you, enough to steal it, you must have wanted to explore the human body...”

Grace’s brow furrowed, and she cautiously asked, “What could you possibly be thinking?”

“The thought occurred to me. Have you also been daring enough to explore your own body?” said Catherine.

She knew exactly what she was doing when pausing for so long. The scandalous question had the desired effect. The faces of all four of them had turned a reddish hue. Satisfied at how quickly she mastered this game, the girl clapped her hands. “Right, the dare. There should be a dare — something equally scandalous, I suppose,” she paused to think, but not for long. “When it comes to bosom, you were quite gifted. Show them to us.”

“Show... them?” said Grace, astonished.

“Yes. Undress and reveal them to us fully,” confirmed Catherine.

An awkward silence fell, each girl fidgeting in a different manner; Grace stroked her own hair in a repetitive motion, Alice rocked her body from left to right, Phoebe instead tapped her fingers together as if she was some kind of evil mastermind. Catherine, however, couldn’t resist chuckling, “Sweet revenge... So, what will it be?”

Grace stood still, holding the gaze of the other girl. She could not back down, not now. She would never be able to take her turn otherwise, the game might even end! Yet she was unsure of which task to choose? They were equally scandalous. So, she opted instead for the choice that would escalate the stakes of the game.

To everyone's shock, she loosened the laces around her dress and lowered it until the layers underneath were revealed; a chemise covered by a brassiere. She gazed at her sister, who assisted her. She reached to her corset, loosening it as well. Phoebe was not pleased since she had no interest in this dare. Helping her sister to dress occurred so many times this was routine for her.

To her two eldest friends, however, this was entirely new. Their curious gazes were on her when she finally pulled down her chemise, revealing the secret beneath it. Alice's hand covered her mouth in shock, but she didn't seem to be able to look away. Catherine, however, couldn't resist approaching to examine them closer.

Grace's eyes drifted to the side, uncomfortable at the girl's sudden interest. She covered herself once more and closed her corset. Her sister jumped to her help and soon she was fully dressed again, albeit her hair was dishevelled. "I didn't think you would dare to go this far. You are usually the most proper of us, Miss. Catherine."

The brunette averted her gaze and shrugged, "Perhaps you guessed me wrong."

Alice's face was still red, she stammered, "W-well, I dare say, this game certainly got interesting."

"To be truthful, when the game is played correctly, it tends to," said Phoebe.

A smirk appeared on Grace's lips. "And so, making things more interesting, we shall. Alice, you are my target."

"I am? Oh dear. Oh dear, please mercy," she replied. She covered her ears as if it would have any effect on shielding her from the next dare.

The dark-haired girl leaned in towards her ear, gently pulling away her hand, “Your question is —” she paused, wondering if she should be so direct, but her curiosity got the better of her, “When we talked about kissing a girl earlier, it seemed to provoke something in you. Miss Alice, you desire to kiss a girl too, don’t you? If it was one of us, which one would you choose? As for your dare; remove your petti skirt and don’t put it back on until the game is over. Also, you must sit on Catherine’s lap until it’s your turn again.”

“Wait — Isn’t that two dares? Also, why must I be involved?” asked Catherine.

Phoebe paused to think. “Once, compared to the previous dares, I think it is suitable. I’ll allow it.”

Alice froze like a caught mouse. She swallowed with difficulty, examining all her options. She stood up and stepped around, pacing left, then right. The girls’ eyes widened when she began to slide her petti skirt down her shin. Whether she intended it or not, it was a silent confirmation that she did indeed wish to kiss one of them. She folded the garment and placed it on the sheet where she used to sit. Then she headed towards Catherine, kneeling in front of her. She crawled forward, careful to be delicate, and finally sat on her lap. She turned her head around and whispered playfully, “I hope you are comfortable.”

The brunette’s face had turned positively red. Her gaze drifted to the roses surrounding them, visibly avoiding the fact she was now holding her friend in her lap.

Grace bit her lip, delighted at the result of her dare. She wasn’t sure why, but playing cherub with her friends was strangely satisfying. Some part of her wanted to see how far she could push them. Yet, at the moment, it was Alice’s turn who seemed to have forgotten it.

Phoebe intervened, “Alice? Hello? It is still your turn.”

“Oh yes, I’m sorry. Of course, let’s see um...” her gaze drifted towards Catherine. Their eyes met, but they quickly looked away from each other. “Phoebe — it’s been a while since it was your turn.”

“Indeed, go ahead, give me your worst.”

Alice's brow furrowed, and she paused to think. She could just return her own dare, but that wouldn't be enough. It had to escalate somehow. "If you were a man, which one of us would you marry?"

"Oh Alice, that's not very intense," said Catherine into her ear.

"It is, think about it, it implies having children together," added Alice.

Phoebe sighed, "I suppose... but you realise my options are Catherine and you? Are you certain this is your question?"

"Positive."

"If you are sure — then what is your dare?"

The girl's gaze searched for ideas, looking around in the garden surrounding them. Her gaze fell to her petti skirt. "I suppose... remove your undergarment and wear mine? We are roughly the same size, no?"

Catherine could barely hold her laughter and coughed, covering her mouth with her hand.

Phoebe was disappointed, almost offended, "Oh please, I can do much worse than that."

"Then remove your dress and be in my undergarments until the end of the game. You assured us earlier; we would be alone in this garden. As you said, the gardener only works in the morning, so we have complete privacy."

"An acceptable dare. But I always pick the most scandalous option. Hmm, is it wicked of me that I desire to do both?"

The girls exchanged a surprised look and bursted out laughing. Alice nodded, giving her permission.

Phoebe appeared delighted and added, "First, I believe I'd want Catherine to have my children. She seems like she would be a magnificent lover and mother."

Grace nodded in approval. Catherine, however, exchanged a disturbed look with the girls surrounding her. “I don’t know if I should feel flattered or disturbed but... So, you want to —”

“— If I were a man and my options were limited to this group, yes,” clarified Phoebe.

Alice held her hands against her face, hiding her disbelief. Meanwhile, Catherine suddenly became aware of her own body and covered her stomach. “Disturbed! I am disturbed. You wish for me to be pregnant?”

Phoebe giggled; her answer accomplished the desired effect. She teased her further, “Oh yes — We’d have many children together.”

Even Grace was alarmed now. She tapped her sister’s shoulder. “Please do NOT scare our guests, Phoebe.”

“Oh, fine —” she grumbled.

There was the matter of the dare left. She first removed her petti pants, putting on instead the petti skirt from Alice. Then she removed her dress. She grinned widely at her friends, now wearing only the undergarments. “The intricate laces on this petti skirt are actually quite delightful, don’t you agree? I’m glad I could wear it.”

She clapped her hands together, turning towards Catherine. “I already dared my sister earlier, so now I wish to dare you, my dear wife.”

“Phoebe!” cautioned Grace.

“I wish to return the question to you, out of the three of us, who would you marry if given the choice? As for the dare, just kiss Alice. For at least 10 seconds.”

Catherine’s eyes fluttered. “On the cheek?”

“No.” Phoebe pointed at her own lips.

The brown-haired girl gasped and held her breath for a moment. Alice turned to stare at something far away, hoping to avoid anyone’s gaze. A silent confirmation perhaps, or a quiet protest. Which one was it?

Grace felt she had to be sure and intervened, “My dear Alice, are you feeling well? Do you wish to take part in this dare?”

She turned to face her, and their eyes met. Alice’s face was entirely red, yet she nodded, albeit only once.

That could have been enough for the game to continue, yet — perhaps things had already gone too far. “My friends, if this is too uncomfortable, there is no need to continue. We may stop and play something else, cards perhaps.”

Phoebe stomped her foot, growling, “Now? While it’s my turn to give a trial?”

Alice whispered, “It’s alright, if you want to... but if you don’t want to kiss me, I —”

Time seemed to stop, for the next unfolding events went far beyond what they expected. Catherine’s arm reached for Alice’s waist, and she was pulled forward. They gazed into each other’s eyes until Alice couldn’t take it anymore. She turned her face away bashfully, yet Catherine persisted, guiding her chin towards her until their lips met.

Phoebe’s brow raised, and she tapped her finger on the side rhythmically, counting the seconds. One tap, two tap, three tap. The kiss was formal, but not for long... Alice evidently began craving for more. Her posture straightened, and she leaned towards her friend, as her arms wrapped around her neck. She moved her lips against hers, startling Catherine at first... yet she would not reject the bold gesture. Their lips moved against each other as their kiss deepened, increasing in intensity as each of them appeared to push each other further and further. Lost in the moment, their eyes closed as their hands travelled to each other’s body and hair. They forgot where they were.

The two sisters could not look away, they were mesmerised by the bold and scandalous nature of their friends’ actions. It surely was the most outrageous act they would ever witness in their entire lives. Phoebe’s counting came to a stop. The sisters shared a glance, their eyes wide open. It had been far longer than 10 seconds, and their embrace was crossing the line from scandalous to — It became urgent to intervene.

Phoebe cleared her throat and yelled, “I want a divorce. My wife has been cheating on me.”

Catherine was the first to pull out of the kiss. She was dazed, confused, even. Her eyes fluttered, still on Alice. Each out of breath, they turned their gazes away from each other.

The red-haired girl returned to her position on Catherine's lap and held her knees close, making herself small. Her eyes shimmered, and she delicately brushed her own lips with the tip of her fingers, already reminiscing about the forbidden gesture.

Catherine was equally flustered but determined to hide it. Her eyes would dart away whenever one of them would look at her. "Ok then, that completed the dare, right? So, it would be my turn now."

Grace observed the entire exchange with fascination. What she witnessed could only mean one thing; her dearest friends loved each other — perhaps they were even in love with each other. She was surprised, despite how shameful it should have seemed, it didn't feel that way at all; She felt happy, glad even.

• Part 2 •

Work in progress... keep an eye on the website for updates!

