

Somebody Errs Surprising Nancy

BY FLORENCE M. MOOTE.

It was 10 o'clock, exactly the hour at which Evelyn Franklin, a bride of two months, telephoned her husband every morning. This was part of an intricate system by which these two, whose honeymoon had not been bounded by the wedding trip, assured each other that their love remained unchanged during the hours that the young husband was occupied by business duties.

As the clock struck its first peal, Evelyn hastened to place the last candied cherry in a shining expanse of white icing, and held her cake up admiringly.

"There, Mr. Cake, you're all done, and you do look just as pretty as any of the cakes 'mother used to make.' Um! but you look good—if you don't make Jack forget all the cooking his mother ever did, I'm going to be mighty disappointed. And now for the telephone!"

As Evelyn took the receiver down, she gave a little gasp of surprise that was quickly smothered; then, as she listened a few seconds, a happy smile overspread her features.

"Jack's voice!" she exclaimed, as she hung up the receiver. "Crossed wires! And what was he saying? 'Sorry, Tom, but I can't be at the directors' meeting tonight. My wife's sister is coming on the 6 o'clock—somewhat of a surprise. Sorry I couldn't send you word sooner.'"

Evelyn clapped her hands delightfully.

"Dear old Nancy! Coming all the way from Fremont, the first time since the wedding! She was going to surprise me, and if it hadn't been for the crossed wires I should never have known. I wonder if Bob is coming with her. And Jack must have been part of the conspiracy, too. Well, I'll surprise them all. Let's see."

A tiny pucker appeared on the pretty forehead for a few seconds, then quickly cleared.

"I have it!" Mrs. Franklin buoyantly sought the telephone.

"Red 692."

"Hello, mother; this is Evelyn."

"Yes. I have a favor to ask, such a big one I'm almost afraid to ask it."

"Would you?"

"Well, I want to borrow Anne all day."

"Oh, I want to give a little dinner party. I want you to come, of course. Please consider this a formal invitation."

"By the way, have you heard from Nancy lately? No? Good!" she murmured in a hurried aside. "She's going to be surprised, too. Ex—what's that? Why—oh, that's to be a secret—a little surprise, you know. I mean a big surprise, a great big one."

"Yes, you'll find out this evening. Thank you so much. Come early, won't you? Good-by."

"Good old Anne will help me just splendidly. And now for the others! There's Aunt Mary and Cousin George, and—well, I'll 'phone these first."

When all the little circle of relatives had been invited and mysteriously informed that there was a great surprise in store, Evelyn made a tour of refrigerator and pantry shelves, with a cook-book in one hand and a pencil in the other.

"Oh, dear, I don't believe I ever planned a dinner-party menu before, all by myself. Let's see—here's a can of pineapple, and Nancy always did like fruit salad. Isn't it lucky I made that cake this morning. Oh and decorations! Just as soon as Anne comes, I'll let her go on with the menu and I'll sketch some place cards. I DO want everything nice, for it's my very first affair in my own home."

"Morning Miss Ev'lin," said Anne from the doorway, as she proceeded to unwrap a gingham apron of generous dimensions. "You're goin' to have a shore-nuff party, ain't you?"

So all day the two worked faithfully and as Evelyn proudly brought out her new silver baking dish and drew her very best silver spoons from their green case, she was planning a little speech of welcome for the guest of honor. Yes, she would put on the blue-flowered frock with the big butterfly girdle, and meet them on the front porch. Then, after her welcoming speech, she would open the door and, sweeping majestically into the living-room and waving her arm gracefully toward the dining table, shining with wedding-present silver and cutglass, and plainly vis-

ible from the living-room of their bungalow home, she would say:

"You see the welcoming banquet is ready and the guests are soon to arrive!"

Or perhaps it would be better to act as though she had been expecting Nancy all along, and had planned for weeks for her coming. She smiled dreamily to herself as she saw, mentally, the bewildered expressions on their faces; she heard their exclamations of wonder and their rapid questioning, but she only smiled mysteriously and led Nancy to the guest-room.

"You shore look happy tonight, chile," said old Anne, as Evelyn appeared in her dainty blue and white frock. "An' you grow prettier every day. Mister Franklin mus' take good care ob you."

"Oh, Anne, do I look all right? And will you fasten just this one hook back there? I couldn't quite reach it. Thank you. Are the patties ready? Now I'll take just one last look at everything."

The guest-room, dainty with crisp ruffled curtains and bits of hand-embroidery, and brightened with fresh flowers, was immaculate, while nothing more inviting could be imagined than the dining table, with its sparkling array of cutglass and silver. Evelyn placed a match to the candles, beneath their ribbon shades, and a rosy glow spread over the table.

"Oh, it's just perfect," breathed Evelyn, as she drew back admiringly.

A cheery whistle sounded without, that very special whistle by which Jack always announced his coming to his bride. Evelyn flew to the door, opened it, and—stared. Jack was alone! Absolutely alone!

"Hello! Why this festive air?" he demanded, taking in party frock, candelabra, and decorations in one bewildered glance.

"Why, where is Nancy?" asked Evelyn, sinking limply into the nearest chair.

"Nancy? Up in Fremont, getting dinner for her fond hubby, I suppose," stated Jack, with a feeble attempt at jocularity. "You surely don't think I have her concealed in my pocket, do you, my dear?"

"Jack! But didn't you—weren't you—telephoning someone this morning about your wife's sister coming this evening so you couldn't go to a directors' meeting, or something?"

"This morning? No, love, I can prove my alibi easily—I was out in the machine all morning, showing property to that man from Michigan. Wasn't even near a 'phone. But what made you think—"

"Oh, dear! I took down the receiver to call you up just at 10, and there I could hear someone talking already—it sounded exactly like your voice, Jack Franklin—and the man was saying that his wife's sister was coming as a surprise. I thought the wires were crossed, and you were on our line. Or, Jack, are you SURE it wasn't you I heard?"

"Quite sure," he assured her solemnly.

"Then whatever shall we do?" moaned Evelyn, with a trace of tears in her voice.

Jack was down on his knees beside his wife instantly.

"Why, sweetheart, what difference does it make? Can't she come some other time just as well?"

"Oh, but look—" Evelyn pointed tragically to the dining-room, with its festive array. "I've invited everybody—yes, everybody—all your relatives and mine, to surprise Nancy tonight, and now—"

"Well," declared Jack, with masculine obtuseness, "the table's ready, and we're here, and there's something to eat, isn't there?"

"But, Jack," she wailed, "I've inveigled all those people into coming here with the hope of a surprise. I didn't tell them why I asked them—I just said I had a big surprise. And now I haven't the courage to confess the true state of affairs to them. I'll never hear the end of it—my first affair, and the relatives-in-law coming, too."

"Never mind," comforted Jack. "There'll be some sort of surprise, if I have to perform a stunt myself. Shall it be a soprano solo or a Grecian dance? We can at least tell them it's a housewarming. Cheer up, little girl!"

"Oh, Jack, dear, think, think HARD! We must do something! There's that lame fiddler down at the Settlement House—he's an odd character; his way of talking is more interesting than his music, and they've never heard him. But that sounds so tame."

"Well, honey, you think, and I'll think, and we'll compare notes im-

mediately after dinner. Here's George and Isabel already, together as usual."

Evelyn's cousin Isabel and Jack's cousin George usually were together, as a matter of fact, though they constantly protested that their interest in each other was purely of a cousinly nature, strengthened by the marriage of Jack and Evelyn.

"Where's the surprise?" demanded George, peering curiously around.

"Do hurry and tell us," begged Isabel, excitedly.

"Not yet," said Evelyn, with a tragic look at Jack. "I'm busy with dinner. Just amuse yourselves as you please for a while, like dear good people."

The little procession of relatives hastening up the street showed how great had been the suspense. Mrs. Pryor entered breathless with interest, but hesitated a moment in the doorway as she saw George and Isabel standing together by the fireplace. Then, with that same tendency to jump hastily at conclusions which Evelyn sometimes displayed, she rushed forward, impulsively extending a hand to each.

"So you're the surprise! You dear couple, I wish you joy!"

Isabel blushing protested, confusion alternating with astonishment. Her protests, however, were overwhelmingly drowned by the showers of congratulations with which she and George were besieged by the circle of relatives who had now assembled.

"And you didn't even tell your own mother!" exclaimed Aunt Mary reproachfully. "You naughty girl! To think that I should first learn of your engagement at an announcement party!"

"When did it happen?" asked Uncle James genially.

"Not very long ago," admitted Isabel reluctantly. "But we didn't intend to tell for a long, long time. How did you all find out about it so soon?"

"Why, isn't that the surprise Evelyn invited us here for?" demanded Aunt Edith Boice.

The announcement of dinner at this juncture saved Evelyn from an embarrassing confession.

As Isabel passed Evelyn, she gave her hand a quick squeeze and whispered:

"You sly puss! It was so dear of you to tell the relatives this way. But how DID you know?"

But Evelyn only smiled mysteriously, while Jack heaved a sigh of relief that the responsibility of providing a surprise had been lifted from his shoulders.

New Method of Bedding Sheep Superior to Old

THE District Forester at Portland, Or., has just announced the results of experiments made, during the past season, in handling sheep under different conditions on the National forest range.

It is stated that former experiments indicated that it was a profitable proposition to give careful attention to the sheep on the range, and the aim of the past season's experiments was to confirm these indications. Several bands of sheep were kept under observation on different forests.

Half of them were handled under the "old methods," and the other half under the "new methods." In every instance there was a gain in favor of the "new method," not only in the sheep themselves, but in the amount of forage that was saved from destruction. As the results were practically the same in all cases, it will be necessary to give the details of but one experiment.

On the Santiam National forest, two bands of sheep were selected. Band No. 1 consisted of 1196 ewes and 1160 lambs. Band No. 2 consisted of 996 ewes and 957 lambs. Range conditions for both bands were identical, but one band was handled under the "old method" and the other under the "new method." In other words, band No. 1 was returned to the same bed ground for several nights in succession, and thus trailed over the same range every day; while band No. 2 was bedded wherever night overtook them, except in stormy weather, and were loosely herded and allowed to graze quietly. Two hundred lambs in each band were weighed when the sheep entered the range, and again when they left. Those of Band No. 2 showed an average gain of 4.2 pounds over those of band No. 1. At 6 cents per pound, this means at least 25 cents per head gain. On 1000 lambs this would amount to \$250. This sum is certainly worth while to the stockman.

Lodgepole pine, one of the principal trees of the Rocky Mountains, makes good, strong wrapping paper and pulp board.

Thousands Going on Land, Says Minister

W. J. BOWSER, Attorney-General of British Columbia at Victoria, has just made public figures which show that the number of homestead entries in the districts opened up by the recently completed Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in the last two years was four times the number of homestead entries in the whole provinces five years ago. The land offices at Prince George, Fort Fraser, Hazelton and Prince Rupert recorded 3643 entries in the last two years and the government expects that this number will be greatly exceeded this year.

In four years the government had surveyed for settlement no less than 3,789,372 acres and the total amount of land surveyed available only to homesteading now amounts to 91,928,567 acres. The Minister points to the fact that this is over three-quarters of the total area of land under cultivation in the whole dominion.

Before the railroads in British Columbia were built, he says, the government withdrew from the market many large tracts of agricultural land to be reserved for homesteading. These lands were surveyed so that the homesteader could go in and select his land without danger of rival and interlapping claims which had in many instances caused confusion before the lands were surveyed. There are many millions of acres of good agricultural land in the province, especially in the districts opened up by the Grand Trunk Pacific, which are available only for homesteading purposes or, as it is called in British Columbia, pre-emption.

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