

MY HEART AND MY HUSBAND

Adele Garrison's New Phase of REVELATIONS OF A WIFE

CHAPTER 342

THE AGREEMENT LILLIAN MADE WITH ROBERT SAVARIN—HOW DICKY RETURNED HOME AND WON FORGIVENESS.

Robert Savarin's eyes followed Lillian's extended hand and rested on the unconscious, graceful figure of her small daughter. When he looked again at us I saw that he had grasped Lillian's meaning fully, and that the force of it had well nigh stunned him. But he set his lips in a grim tight line and I felt instinctively that he had not yet given up the contest in which he had set his own will against that of his liege lady with the happiness of both as a stake.

Lillian's own eyes were dark with sorrow and longing, but inflexible as his. I caught myself

repeating mentally the old catch problem of my school days: "When an irresistible force meets an immovable body—" I waited breathlessly to hear Robert Savarin's reply to her assertion that Marion was her reason for refusing his suit. When it came it was couched in sterner, stubborn accents.

"On the contrary," he said slowly, "she is one of the reasons why you should marry me." "When she was a baby," Lillian replied bitterly, "her name was spoken in a vile divorce suit, her innocent baby face pictured in the newspapers. It was no fault of mine, I will grant you that, but—it happened. Do you think that now when she is hearing young girlhood, and the old scandal has been forgotten, that I will risk a repetition of that old publicity? Don't you suppose I haven't gone over this from every angle since Harry so effectually and completely freed me from any obligation to him? I thought for a time that perhaps—but—I can't risk it. I can see the headlines now. Ugh! They would rake up every detail of that old time. No, Robert, I cannot and I will not drag my child through that again."

"How can you help it?" I asked coolly. "Mr. Underwood seems determined to get a divorce, whether you wish it or not."

Now I knew that Harry Underwood meant no such thing

Lillian did not, and I saw that my chance shot had scored. "Does he? Do you think—" she began, then her face was set in its inflexible lines again. "Public comment on that would be mild compared to that caused by my remarriage," she said, and there was a finality in her statement that made me launch my suggestion with a feeling of hopelessness. "Why not let Marion decide the question herself?" I said.

Robert Savarin caught at my suggestion as a man in danger of drowning would at a rope flung to him. "Oh! my dear!" He turned to her with outstretched hands, and the passionate entreaty in his voice, the worshipful love in his eyes were things to remember as seldom witnessed in this prosaic latter day world, "will you not do this—leave the decision to the child herself? You know what my life would be without you, you have told me—"

What Lillian Said.

"That my life can never know complete happiness without you, Robert." She finished the sentence bravely, then continued wearily, yet inflexibly. "However, that matters little beside keeping one's faith. You know, Robert, and you, too, Madge, that the child is too young to know what the consequences of her decision would be. She adores you, Robert, and if anything could make me yield to my own selfish heart in this matter it would be the knowledge of her joy if I should marry you. Dear heart!" she turned swiftly and put her hands on Robert Savarin's shoulders.

"You do not ask me seriously to let Marion thus blindly bind her own future?"

She had won! The man's delicacy of honor and of perception would not let him reply only as he did.

"No," he said hopelessly, "but oh! my God!" I hurried away trying to move noiselessly, but I don't think either of them knew or cared for my presence or absence. Going straight to my own room I locked the door and lay down, trying to conquer the raging headache which my worry over Dicky's unexplained absence had brought on, and the excitement of the last few minutes had intensified. After awhile, exhausted, I fell asleep, was awakened by Lillian's familiar knock upon the door. When I had opened the door I saw that she had buried under her iron will all trace of the conflict from which she had won so sad a victory.

"Robert asked me to make his excuses to you, Madge," she said quietly. "He returned to New York on the 5:30 train, and will not be out again for several days."

I looked at her curiously, divided between disapproval of her severity to the man who loved her so devotedly, and admiration of her inflexible adherence to her own code of honor. She smiled at me sadly, yet with a subtle hint of whimsicality that startled me.

"I know everything you would like to say," she said. "Will it comfort you any to know that I promised Robert Savarin that when Marion was old enough to realize the consequences of her own decision I would abide by it?"

"Oh! Lillian!" In my delight I almost smothered her. "Perhaps you have not reflected," she said dryly, "that by that time Robert Savarin and I will be old, old people. But it has helped him to bear it, and that is all that matters."

She shrugged her shoulders as if she were slipping a burden from them, then walked toward me, and took me by the shoulders.

"A truce to my affairs!" she said. "Let's consider yours for a minute or two. H-m." She looked me over critically. "You look as if the judge was just about to say 'And may God have mercy on your soul.' Now do something to please me. Take an ice cold shower, splash plenty of cold water on your cheeks, do your hair carefully, and put on a pretty gown for dinner. Never mind why!" anticipating the question on my lips. "Just obey me."

I did as she commanded, she waiting in my room and helping me dress. When I had passed her final approving inspection she kissed me lightly on the cheek. "Remember what I told you

about either fishing or cutting bait. You've either got to take Dicky's tantrums less seriously and emotionally or be a docile doormat all your life, afraid to speak lest you anger him. Now I'm going to double-cross the Dicky-bird in order to give you the advantage. He's downstairs, not nearly as penitent as he ought to be, but palpably anxious to make up, and more anxious to take you by surprise. I told him you were asleep with a headache, but that I'd let him know as soon as you awoke. Ah! I see you don't need any rouge. But, remember, make him earn his forgiveness."

"Tell Me Quick—"

I tried hard to keep her advice in mind, though my pulses leaped in protest as I heard his footsteps on the stairs. But I managed a nonchalant smile as he knocked, and then entered at my "Come in."

"Hello, Madge," he said carelessly, but I had seen him start at my gala attire.

"Hello, Dicky," I retorted as in-

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differently. "Won't you sit down?" "Thanks, I'm in a hurry. Going out?" "No." "Expecting guests?" There was an uncertain note in his voice now. "Perhaps." I could not help the tantalizing reply, but it had an unexpected result, for my husband crossed to me with one mighty stride and caught me fast, fast in his arms. "You teasing little devil!" he said, and there was that in his voice which made all my resentment melt away. "I ought to

shake you till your teeth rattle for you certainly stretched me up the gridiron the other night when that jackanapes was making sheep's eyes at you, and was taking your arm off. But, of course, I had to make seven kinds of Gadarene swine of myself, and all I'm going to do is to say 'sorry, sorry,' and kiss you dumb and blind. Tell me, quick. Do you love me?" And with the blessed hope in my heart that all our quarrels would end thus I answered him: "What?" Every woman knows. (See Announcement Below)

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