

MY MARRIAGE PROBLEMS

Adela Garrison's New Phase of REVELATIONS OF A WIFE

CHAPTER 163 THE DISCONCERTING REQUEST WITH WHICH DICKY TROUBLED MADGE

The fear that the man Smith would try to revenge himself upon Dicky, now that he knew he was living within a mile of us, became almost a mania with me in the hours following my encounter with the man upon the woodland road.

to New York for two or three days. "I ought to have gone before," he said, and I knew the statement was but a pious truth.

"Of course," I said, almost a shade too promptly, for I did not want Dicky to guess that I wished him out of the way.

"It will give you a clear field for your diplomatic researches," he said with the suspicion of a sneer, but the little fangs drew no irritated response from me.

Neither of us had, until now referred to that tense moment when Dicky had laid down the law so emphatically to me with such strenuous, almost tragic results.

know that my husband never would refer to it again, and that this was his way of telling me that he had rescinded his prohibition. But on my part I had a little resolve to keep as much out of the thing as I possibly could without hindering Lillian.

"I knew—though I had in times past tried to gloss over the knowledge—that I welcomed the thrill of helping in the great game, of being a tiny part of it, far more than did my childish melodramatic-loving mother-in-law. I suppose it is because women for so many centuries have been fettered with the humdrum, that they welcome so joyously any chance to do the things which custom and the will of their men folk have kept from them.

"Look It Up—" "Can I help you get ready?" I asked the customary perfunctory question to cover my silence at Dicky's gibe, and received his stereotyped answer:

"Yes, you can leave me alone and not bother me." My knowledge of my husband taught me neither to take offense at this retort nor to pay any attention to it. I station myself in my room, opening from his, and pretended to be busy with some sewing, knowing that before he was ready for his journey he would summon me many times.

The early train to the city, which is almost imperative if one does not wish to waste most of the day in travel, makes it impossible for ease-loving, procrastinating Dicky to wait until the morning to make his preparations for the journey. He has missed the train two or three times by attempting that feat, and has finally submitted to the regime of packing his bag and shaving, leaving nothing for the morning but a dash into his clothes and a snatch at a bite of breakfast.

But the necessity always makes him ill-natured, and I had hard work to keep my resentment at his caustic little flings from betraying itself. Nevertheless, I managed it, and at last he declared himself ready for the trip.

"Much obliged, old dear," he said with a sort of rough ungraciousness. "You're a good cook, if you are a little balmy in the bean. And now, for the love of Mike, turn out that light and let me get to sleep. I'll only have

five or six hours. By the way, do you know where that Spanish comb is that Edie left out here last spring? I've been trying to remember to bring it in to her ever since, but I've never thought of it until I've seen her. Look it up for me, that's a good girl, and slip it into my bag. Fix it so it won't break."

"It's in a case," I heard myself saying. "It won't break. I'll get it right away."

"Time enough in the morning," Dicky said sleepily. "Turn out that light, I told you! Good-night."

CHAPTER NO. 170

THE WAY MADGE CONQUERED HERSELF AND DICKY LEFT

Dicky was going to see Edith Fairfax! This was the thought which made me stand motionless for a breathless second or two after I had, at his request, turned out his light. Indeed, I was incapable of motion, for the sound of the girl's name, the knowledge that she was again on Dicky's horizon had been like unexpected blows in the face.

She must have returned from the West Virginia mountains to which I knew she had gone with Aunt Dora Paige for a much-needed rest. I had hoped that after the genuine remorse which had swayed her for her unwitting share in the terrible affair of Junior's kidnapping, the nervous breakdown, which was the result of that awful time, she would yield to the devotion of Dr. Jim Paige, the distant cousin who had been her loving saint since her childhood.

I had counted on her forgetting the hopeless love for Dicky which had tortured her and had caused her so much mental anguish. But it she were back in Marvin— I broke off my mental musings at this point to scold myself savagely for my folly. All this emotion over the trifling fact that Dicky had asked me to put a Spanish comb which Edith had left at our home in the spring into his bag so that he could give it to her! If the comb had belonged to almost any other woman of my acquaintance, I would have thought nothing of the incident. And the very casualness of the remark, its openness, ought to have shown me that there was nothing in Dicky's attitude about which I needed to worry.

But I knew my Peter Pan, and I wondered if so long an imprisonment in the domestic cage, even though it was voluntary, were not palling upon him, if he were not beginning to feel the vague restlessness which generally preceded some escapade, harmless enough in itself, but distinctly trying for me.

There was but one thing to do, however, and that was to speed him on his journey with casual, affectionate cheerfulness, letting no hint of my fears escape me, and I succeeded so well that I think Dicky, with masculine inconsistency, actually resented my cheerful casualness at parting.

"I may stay days," he said, as we drew up to the station. "There's no reason why you can't stay as long as you like," I responded promptly. Everything is going on swimmingly at home now, and we really don't need you."

"So Long, Old Dear." "Oh, you needn't rub it in that I'm only a sort of fifth wheel around the menage!" he retorted with a cross intonation which made me suddenly remorseful, but not enough to make one alter the tactics which I was sure were best with my volatile spouse.

"You're the whole four wheels, and also the steering gear," I returned lightly. "But here comes the train. Have a nice trip, and give my love to her. Fluffiness, Edith and Letta."

"I'll just do that little thing," he said. "And I'll kiss 'em all around for you in the bargain. Well, so long, old dear. Take the best care of yourself." (To be continued)

"What the devil are you doing there in the dark? Can't you find your way out of the room?"

Dicky's voice came crossly from the bed. "I'm going this second," I returned, hastening out of the room, thankful that I had escaped further catechism. It was had enough not to be able to control my jealousy of Edith Fairfax, but to betray it to Dicky as I already, unavoidably had done once or twice, was unthinkable.

Try as I might, however, I could not put out the flame of my jealous pain with the fire-extinguisher of common sense. I wonder how many other women have tried the same dampening process only to find the flames flashing up more brightly than ever.

Luckily for Edith, I imagine, that we live in a civilized age, I shudder to think with what subtle poison a mediaeval ancestress of mine might have impregnated the teeth of the fragile, beautiful comb which I fastened securely in its case and put into Dicky's bag in the early morning after many sleepless hours.

What Madge Wondered.

I tried to comfort myself with the remembrance of the remorse which had been Dicky's for his absence motoring with Edith upon that day Junior was kidnapped. At that moment I knew he had hated her, and I also hugged the remembrance to my mind of the months of quiet devotion from my husband which had been my lot since that time. Upon one memorable day in the Catskills he had declared with emphasis that he was "through" with all philandering, that he had "gotten his" when Junior was stolen, and that henceforth I would have to provide all the thrills from a humdrum domestic existence.

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