

LET'S LIVE

By MILDRED LAMB
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CHAPTER I

It was Byrd's wedding night. There was a tumult in her heart, a tumult of joy and fear. Every girl who has been led to the altar knows that feeling—a mingling of happy emotions with vague and uncertain premonitions. But until today she hadn't thought of it that way! Not just that way! She had been too happy with Larry to even think of their life after marriage.

She had lived in a dream, a dream of love, of joy, of beauty—a dream that had opened up enchanting vistas where she and Larry wandered irresponsible and carefree sons and sons of time.

Tonight she had stepped down to earth for the first time, and she was afraid. Just a teeny, teeny bit frightened.

She trembled slightly, as she gazed at the shimmering cloud with its nebula of floating mist that was her wedding gown, as it was reflected in the long glass over the dressing table.

She thought guiltily that she did look like the moon, wrapped in bolts and bolts of satiny clouds, as Larry had said when he had peeped in once when she was "trying on."

The little half-moons of yellow silk that camouflaged the lights over her dressing table threw an added sheen over her soft bronze hair, wound in strands of gold about her small and shapely head, and gave a deeper luster to her

her father, who was big and brawny in stature and heavy in issue, and still less like her mother, who was tall, angular and sharp-featured. To Byrd she looked unreal without a dustcloth pinned around her head, for Mrs. Hamilton was the old-fashioned housekeeper who just had to take an active part in all the household activities.

In fact, the only member of the family who bore any resemblance to Byrd was Patricia, called "Pat," and sometimes "Pep," because she was as full of high spirits as a puppy, and was known all over town for her tomboy pranks.

At sixteen, Pat was still a gangling child with a ready tongue and a shrewd and untutored idea of life. Most of the time she looked all legs, elbows and eyes. It was a constant race, her mother said, between her knees and her skirt hems. Pat had glorious hair that curled all over her head in deep, coppery shades, lighting up the ends to warm rich reds of a setting sun. Byrd scolded her constantly for always running her fingers through it so that it "always looks just like a cosy corner."

Then Byrd's eyes were drawn by some magnetic force to Larry's. He was standing there at the minister's side so at ease, so assured, his compact form drawn up to its full height of six feet, so young, so handsome and so distinguished-looking, the lines of his suit not

criss-crossed with an entanglement of tiny wrinkles. "Shuckal he said half aloud. From everything that he had heard about Lawrence Browning, he was an up-and-coming young man. His industry was attested by the fact that one of the members of his firm had come all the way from Cleveland to attend the wedding. Larry had a bright, alert way of discussing matters, and it was only natural that his wider experience should make him feel a little superior to his father-in-law, whose career was perhaps a matter of good-luck and lack of competition in a small town.

"By gum!" said Mr. Hamilton, as he wiped the perspiration off his dripping forehead and smoothed down the grey, bristling hair that stood out, in moments of excitement, like a crop of scrup oak. "It's certainly a ticklish job getting the ugly duckling married off. I didn't work half so hard to raise a half million for the new hospital!"

"Papa, why do you have to make a joke of everything?" asked Mrs. Hamilton, with a catch in her voice.

Mr. Hamilton drew in his breath deeply, as if to cover an impending break. "Clear out, everybody!" he said, quietly. "Mama and I want to be alone with these two newly-weds!"

He turned to Byrd and Larry, and put an arm around each of them. Then he drew out a slip of paper, which he handed them. "I was going to give you a little advice on the use of this, but I've changed my mind. There ain't goin' to be no strings tied to it." He blew his nose violently, and it

tucked his handkerchief, deeply bordered in purple, back into his pocket.

Byrd caught her breath as she glanced at it. It was a check for five thousand dollars. It was made out to Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Browning. Larry put the check in his pocket, thanking them.

Byrd threw her arms around her mother, and then her father, giving him an extra squeeze, a long, light quivering embrace, which clung to him the rest of his life.

Then Larry held out his hands to her. It was time to go.

In his smiling, slightly arrogant eyes, there was a curious, vibrant glewing expression that pronounced him altogether male.

..... And Byrd knew then that Larry was the only man she would ever love.....

..... She knew then that no matter what he did, she would continue all her life to love him and forgive him.....

The little chains of dread that had held her back, seemed suddenly to break, and she thought to herself, with an inexpressible happiness surging through her slender, young body:

"Why, I'd go anywhere with Larry! I'd do anything for Larry!"

And Byrd needed all the faith in the world, for before many hours had passed, something happened to test her love in an extraordinary way.

(To Be Continued.)

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One thing you've got to say for these professional hockey hold-outs—they're not cheap skates.

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There was something fragile and exquisite about her. She made you think of the flowers that bloom at night under the pale fire of the moon..... the night-blooming cereus in its waxy beauty, or the moonflower that held the bare beauty of her shoulders as a calyx holds its bud, while the iridescence of satin seemed to shower her with its silvery radiance and her will drew a silver cloud over her head.

Some one rapped at the door, and Byrd called: "Just one minute and I'll be ready!"

Her heart was beating like a sledge hammer, and she wasn't quite sure that she wanted to join the procession waiting for her at the top of the stairs.

It was perfectly ridiculous to get excited about it, she was saying to herself. An experience that the whole world shared could have no mystery. It was the natural order of the universe..... common to all living things everywhere. But she stood rooted to the spot as if invisible fingers were holding her..... that story she had read in the paper haunted her.

A girl in Cleveland had postponed her wedding three times, becoming each time strangely ill, and the last time she had locked herself in her room when the strains of the wedding march began..... and they had to break down the door..... Byrd almost sobbed with sympathy for her..... There, in that story, lay the entire tragedy of sex.....

The great, old-fashioned house, with its "big" parlor and its "little" parlor, its large hall and larboard dining room, seemed to absorb easily the many guests that thronged it now. It made a bright picture, with the walls garlanded with spring flowers reflected in the spring-colored dresses of the girls and women.

Some of Larry's friends, even a member of the firm for which he worked, had come all the way from Cleveland and stood a little apart, a smart, distinguished-looking group, a little superior as city folks are apt to be.

The strains of the wedding march floated up the stairs, and now Byrd was descending on her father's arm. She seemed to be carried down on the rhythm of the music.

The guests edged closer against the ribboned aisle that her two little nieces as flower girls had drawn, straining to get a full view of the bride.

Byrd wasn't in the least im-

concealing entirely the packs of muscles that moved lightly under the smooth, black broadcloth. His serious, dark eyes held a secret message for her, as they held her close to him for an instant.

She loved Larry distractedly when his face wore that fine, uplifted expression.

Why, when he looked at her like that, she felt queerly faint inside like a violin whose strings have been softly and a little cruelly tightened by the musician who alone knows how the mute or force the sounds from within.

Six months ago she had gone to Cleveland to visit friends. And there she had met Lawrence Browning..... It was at a dance..... they were introduced, and he had asked her to dance. Stepping into his arms their eyes had met. Something "clicked!"

Her light weight in his arms had released some secret spring in both their bodies that had thrilled them simultaneously with a sudden electrical shock..... that had swept them together..... and bound them with a thousand tiny, invisible..... wires..... They had felt "his" presence as if "it" had been a person!

And Larry had stopped stock still in the middle of the dance, before a word had been spoken between them, and kissed the top of her bronze hair, softly, reverently, like a prayer.

Suddenly she was conscious of the deep, throaty tones of the minister, spacing off his words as if he were measuring them with a ruler.

..... Wilt thou take this man to be thy wedded husband..... the voice of the minister boomed and questioned her.

Byrd shivered as if some ghostly hand had suddenly shaken a warning, spectral finger at her. Gray patches floated before her eyes, and the room became blurred and unreal. Larry, noting her sudden pallor, put a sustaining, encouraging arm, a strong, encouraging arm.

"I do!" Byrd's voice floated, flute-like and steady, upon the tense air, and the sigh of relief that escaped her mother's lips was heard all over the room.

The crisis had been safely passed, and now laughter and congratulations filled the air. The kindly and familiar faces of old family friends and neighbors crowded past her down the receiving line.

Her father, on her right, added just the correct amount of buoyancy to the occasion, with his hearty and overflowing good humor, which now and then couldn't resist dropping a "little story" into the willing, but shocked, ear of some overplus soul. He gave her evening a sore of ease, for everybody adored big Jim Hamilton, president of the Litchville

ings and Loan company, and about the most important and well-to-do man in town.

An hour later, Byrd was slipping into the going-away gown, a gray "ensemble" purchased in a smart little shop in Cincinnati. In it she looked like a grey dove that was to make a long journey into a half-mythical world of bright hopes and rosy romance.

"Moms! You looked just beautiful," said Byrd, proudly, as her quick fingers snapped and buttoned and adjusted side elastics. "And Jenny and Jinna looked like two little angels. And Pat was as cool as anything. I was afraid she was going to look like a vaudeville queen with all that make-up. It was the most heavenly wedding that any girl ever had."

Byrd put on the chic little hat that matched the suit, and led it so that her rakish whisk swept her ear and completely covered one eye.

"Ain't you tilting it a little too?" began Mrs. Hamilton.

Her mind was concerned entirely with the little things, details, unimportant facts, all the minutia of life.

There was a rush up he stairs, and Pat burst in before she could finish.

"For Pete's sake!" she exclaimed. "Aren't you ever coming down? Having prayers or something?" She looked around, disgustedly, at their serious faces. Then her eyes fell on Byrd. "She's queen! Spiffy, I'll say! You look like one of those swell French mannequins! Now for goodness' sake, live up to that outfit!"

Pat put up her hands, as if to ward off an imaginary blow. Then she hopped up on the foot of the walnut bed, with legs swinging.

"Patricia!" said her mother, sharply, "pull your skirts down..."

"Moms, I've got to leave in a minute," said Byrd, wondering what was keeping Larry and her father.

There was a din and shouting below.

Suddenly she saw Larry standing in the doorway, flashing that brilliant smile that no woman, had she but known, had ever been able to resist. Her father was with him.

"Clear the stairs, dad, darling," Byrd said, nervously. "Moms, take my bouquet and hold it till I get my gloves on. Heavens! don't let me forget to throw it." Turning to Pat, "Get down where you'd have a chance of catching it. Pat dear, I'd rather you have it than anybody in the world."

"Oh, I don't want it!" said Pat, disdainfully. "I'm going to stay single for a while and have some fun."

The tension of the moment began to take its toll of Mrs. Hamilton's nerves. Until this moment, she had shown the same gratification that she might have felt if she had married Byrd to royalty. She began to sniff audibly, and wipe her eyes.

"It's so hard to give you up," she said, pathetically, "but a girl has to go through it some time. Anyway, I hope you'll always remember that your father and I have always tried to do what was best for you."

Byrd saw the struggle it was costing her father to carry off the moment with his usual broad, rolicking humor. He adored Byrd. Under all their bantering and chaffing each other, there was a deep, indestructible, mutual love.

Now, observed only by Byrd, Mr. Hamilton turned his kindly, shrewd eyes, their points of light as penetrating as searchlights, upon his son-in-law, and momentarily the smooth, florid skin was



Going Up!

Nightly, now, her smile is wide, and her eyes are full of life. She is lovely Corinne Burton, whose New York home is the New Weston Hotel. Her march to fame includes a season each in "The Music Box" and "The Scandals," and now, under Chas. Bowers' direction, she's going up in the movies!

"I don't believe in overlooking any point which may help make your presence pleasing," says Miss Burton. "Recently, I learned the method of caring for the hair, which is all the rage among New York girls, now. It's so easy. All you do is put a little Danderine on your brush every time you arrange your hair. It makes my hair so easy to dress and holds it in place wonderfully. It has gotten rid of my dandruff. It keeps my scalp and hair so clean and comfortable that I don't shampoo half as often as I used to. It gives my hair such a silky, soft and lustrous appearance that friends comment on it."

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