

# LET'S LIVE! MILDRED LAMB

Byrd and Larry Browning had been married only a short time. It had been only a few days since they had been together at first sight between a man who wanted life to move swiftly and excitedly and a girl of golden beauty, simply brought up in a small town, who expected to settle down and have a home and children.

There were many things that threatened their happiness right from the beginning. Larry's partnership with unscrupulous Jack Duncan in a speculative venture, floating the stock of the Builders' Supply company, Larry's continued means from Byrd's father, who was president of a bank in Jacksonville, the separation of parties with a fast-moving crowd, consisting of Tivy and Fred, Oberman, Jack and Mary Duncan, Chet Everson and India Campbell, a former sweetheart of Larry's; Larry's growing estrangement, his refusal to break off his friendship with India, lastly, their increasing number of quarrels over bills, their ever increasing quarrels over all of differences.

It was arranged during a visit of the parents, that Pat, her younger brother, who was hitting the trail like a flash of lightning, should spend the summer with them, hoping they would be able to straighten her out. She would be company for Byrd, since Larry had to go out of town and was much worried by the set Jack seemed to be weaving about her, at the bills that had been paid and the new furniture growing old on Larry, at Pat's coming, which complicated things still further. Pat, with her hair and love of dress, had a certain red outfit for the bright clothes she had bought, in an attempt to encourage the friendship between Pat and India, which had grown up like a mushroom. Pat referred to Byrd's own conduct on a certain night. One night when Pat and Larry had gone to a movie, Jack Duncan had forced his attention on Byrd, and she had refused. Pat and Larry were in New York had attempted to prevent Pat's knowing that Chet had sailed on her. He had come to see her about the bad reputation which Larry had Jack's project was getting, but Pat didn't know this.

Pat interrupted the visits of Jack and Larry and later of Chet, who came to consult Byrd on what he learned was Larry's dangerous position with regard to the Builders' Supply, which had gotten a bad reputation. Byrd was helpless in breaking up the friendship between Pat and India, particularly when Pat overheard a particularly bitter and suspicious quarrel between Mary and Byrd, in which Mary accused Byrd of vamping her husband.

GO ON WITH THE STORY. CHAPTER XXXI

LARRY grabbed Peter out of Pat's arms and started upstairs with him.

"You needn't bother to come down again," said Byrd to her. "We're going."

But Mary continued upstairs. If she hadn't heard her at all, Byrd knew she had to make some explanation to Pat.

But she was so completely upset by Mary's behavior toward her that she couldn't for the life of her even think what she was going to say to her. She couldn't even over the whole thing lightly, or then Pat would seek an explanation from India. She would have to say something definite.

What in the world could she tell her? Anything but the truth, she decided, for Pat would immediately draw her conclusions then about Larry and the entire crowd he ran after. India could give her a lot of misinformation, but she would not be likely to involve Larry in

## YOUNG CRUSADERS INDIA BOUND



Off to the land of the tiger and cobra where they will forswear the world for five years, nine young men and women, under the auspices of the World Wide Christian Couriers, will soon start a tour of eastern cities before departing for central India as the youngest missionaries ever sent to that country. Left to right, above, is Miss Anna Leroy, Miss Pauline Rader, Northwestern university co-ed and daughter of Paul Rader, leader of the crusaders, and Miss Eva Edwards—three members of the party shown examining their tickets.

made the sandwiches and squeezed the lemons for a midnight lunch. Pat's tongue ran on incessantly about India.

"India thinks you learn more in practical things working in a big department store. You meet the nicest people. She watches all the smartly dressed women that come to her counter and then goes and buys something nobody would have, and in a few weeks it's the smartest thing in town. That's how she happens to have such lovely clothes and pay so little for them," said Pat. "She sure knows her Guggenheims, doesn't she? She says what I need more than a business training is a few lessons on how to act in a ballroom."

There were tears of irritation and worry in Byrd's eyes. Why had she, of all people, ever become involved in such a mix-up? "Well, my advice, Unconscionable!" said Pat, with all the wisdom of the ages, "is to go right to Larry and tell him the whole story and let him punch this guy's face."

"But you must see, Pat," argued Byrd, "that it's up to me not to cause a breach between Larry and Jack. Not right now. Jack has threatened to take a position in Chicago, and that would leave the whole burden on Larry's shoulders, debts and all."

Chet telephoned shortly after they'd gotten back to the apartment to say he was bringing one of the boys down at the bank, Eddie Worthington, with him for a game of bridge.

Pat was all excitement. The prospect of a new man, like a new dress sent galloping thrills up and down her back.

"They'll be here about eight," said Byrd, starting to peel potatoes for their dinner.

"India's going to drop in a little while this evening, too," said Pat. "We can take turns cutting in."

While Byrd fried the lamb chops and mixed the salad, Pat

had narrowed down to "If you tell me, I'm going to tell on you!"

"What in the world do you mean?" asked Byrd, soberly. Her voice was low, for she had made up her mind to hold her temper.

"Didn't I say you'd stepped along since you're married?" derided Pat, in a loud voice. "How dumb do you think I am. Stupid?"

"Pat, you're just being mean," pleaded Byrd. "I haven't the slightest idea what you mean."

"Well, you'll know if you ever get father to push along your plans for me!" threatened Pat.

"Listen to me, Pat," said Byrd fiercely. "India's been telling you all sorts of tales. I've told you she's unreliable, and if you're going to start running around with her and taking her advice, I'm through. I'll write father right this minute that you're coming home tomorrow night. I mean it!"

"India hasn't said a darn thing," said Pat, stubbornly, but a dark glow leaped to the roots of her hair just as it used to do when she was caught in an untruth. Pat always gave her friends the benefit of the doubt even against her family, when it came to a test of her friendship for them. But when something serious was about to happen to the family, then she threw loyalty and everything else to the winds.

"Well!" said Byrd, waiting, the potato masher still clenched in her right hand.

Pat pretended to be warding it off with both hands. "Now, don't go and get all steamed up over nothing!" she

said, as she saw little beads of moisture breaking out on Byrd's forehead. "But give me credit for good eyesight and some brains. The first night I'm here, Larry and I surprise you in Jack's arms and then you make an engagement. We take care of a little business matter, and you meet Chet and do your best to edge me out of the apartment before he comes."

It was all perfectly true. Byrd put down the potato masher and turned away. She was on the verge of hysteria. Suddenly Pat realized that some worry was stooping those slender shoulders of Byrd's and that she was deeply hurt and unhappy.

Pat ran to her impulsively, putting her arms around her sister. Pat's flaming hair seemed moonstruckly to absorb the lighter tones of the heavy strands that coiled like ropes around Byrd's small head.

"Come on, darlin', tell me what's bothering you. Something is," urged Pat, holding Byrd still closer.

"I can't," said Byrd, bound not to give way, but wiping her eyes furtively. "I think it's going to be all right, but I want you to promise me you won't listen to any gossip you hear about Larry or me. You'll probably hear enough from that little snake."

Then suddenly Pat's whole attitude changed.

"If India says one more word about you or anybody else," she broke out, "I'm through with her, and I'm going to tell her so."

Chet and Eddie Worthington arrived first.

Eddie was a fresh-cheeked boy, with frank eyes, beautifully even teeth, which protruded slightly and gave a faint lip, and curly, brown hair. He did odd jobs for Chet at the bank.

Pat fell for him on the spot. He had a smart, slangy line that impressed Pat as the most cosmopolitan conversation she'd ever heard.

They had just started to play bridge when India arrived, but for the first time that Byrd could remember, nobody paid the least attention to her. Refusing to take Byrd's place at the table, she sat at her elbow, silently watching the game. Then she woke to the fact that there was an attractive boy in the room. But Eddie continued to ignore her.

"Say, littlest," India said to him. "I've been trying to think where I first saw those rows of matched pearls that you eat with. You used to work at Butnik's drug store, right around the corner from where I live."

India was perfectly heartless, though Byrd. Poor Eddie was so proud of working in a bank, and here first thing, India has to puncture his balloon. Eddie colored to the roots of his hair.

"I suppose the phiz you used to shake up all day at the soda counter gave you all this froth," continued India, laughing her deep, throaty, devastating laugh.

"You ought to see the cracked ice I can hand out, too," said Eddie, recovering from the blow. "It might not melt in your mouth, though."

"What a modest one it is," she returned, lightly. "I see you learned your Asperin."

"And Beecham's Little Liver Pills for people with nasty skins and dispositions," Eddie retorted, beginning to enjoy the skirmish.

"He had a good line, but it broke," she said, yawning and getting up.

Eddie chortled victoriously. India started the victrola and broke up the bridge game. Eddie changed the record and sang in his best vaudeville manner. "A

Baby's Best Friend is Its Mother." Pat and Eddie brought in the refreshments, which disappeared in almost no time. The glasses were empty, and the sandwich plate, too.

"Make another batch with the sausage in the ice box," said Byrd, as they started again for the kitchen.

India sat glowering behind a magazine, while Byrd and Chet attempted to carry on the conversation.

They could hear Eddie and Pat

howling delightedly at each other's quips. "No matter how thin you cut it, it's still Bologna!" Eddie called to them. Only he pronounced it "bo-loney."

India tasted the lemonade and made a wry face. "Why put us on bread and water?" she wanted to know. "I need some synthetic refreshment to take the taste out of my mouth!" And she made another wry face at Eddie.

(Turn to Page 13, Please.)

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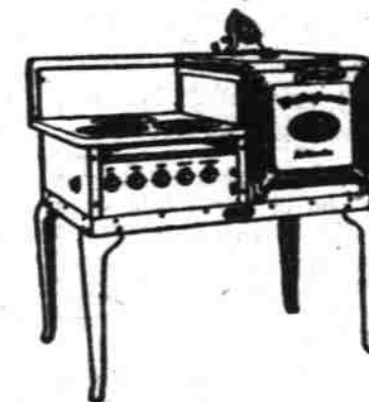


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