

# LET'S LIVE! MILDRED LAMB

CHAPTER LXI

Byrd told her father and mother that Larry was out of town for a few weeks, and that explanation seemed to be sufficient for a while. But after the second week, her father's quizzical glances in her direction, and her mother's direct questions began to give her a decidedly uncomfortable feeling.

In order to avoid her mother's dictatorship around the house, Byrd started right at the beginning of her visit home to go down to the bank with her father every morning. He had kept her busy and seemed glad to have her helping him. But even this began to pall. Work in a country bank was as exciting as a position as Mr. Polk's secretary.

Byrd helped Minnie with the dishes every night, and was usually on the point of screaming when they had finished. Minnie was a particularly stupid person and asked the same questions over and over about city life.

Afterwards she usually sat with the family, including Minnie, around the marble-topped sitting room table, her father reading his paper, her mother with her sewing and Minnie gazing at her through thick lens, ready to ask another question.

"It beats me that you haven't heard from Larry since you've been here," said her mother sharply.

"Who said I hadn't heard from him?" asked Byrd, assuming an injured tone.

"Well, there ain't no letter come to this house," snapped Mrs. Hamilton grimly, between set teeth. "And I haven't heard you say you'd gotten any mail at the bank."

For a second Byrd was nonplussed. She knew that she could never take her mother into her confidence, not until she was forced to ward her father for help.

"What's that you're saying, Het?" he inquired, as if he'd heard just the tale-end of the conversation. Mrs. Hamilton repeated her words.

"And if you ask me, I think it's mighty queer for a young married woman, a bride of not yet a year, to go traipsing off every little while, making her hard-working husband pay unnecessary traveling expenses."

Her father laughed good naturedly. Nothing could ruffle him. He had the poise of a man without a single nerve in his body.

"Well, if you'd give Byrd a chance instead of biting all the talking yourself, she'd probably tell you that she gets a telegram every other day or so and that in a letter she got at the bank the other day Larry said he was moving around so fast that he'd just written her in the middle of the night. That stock of his is selling like popcorn balls!"

"Well, if he's in this part of the country, it looks pretty funny to me that he can't run down over to see his wife and kids. Mrs. Hamilton continued, biting out the words with a gritting sound like the gnashing of teeth.

"Well, if you've got to know every little sniveling detail about your son-in-law's affairs," continued Mr. Hamilton, "he explained to me how he was going to get out of Cleveland after his partner's death and straighten out a mess of things there. That took several week-ends, I suppose."

Byrd looked with amusement and gratitude at her father. And when her mother had gone upstairs to get ready for bed, she giggled together over the scene.

"Gosh, Jim," said Byrd, eyeing her father with admiration, "what a whopping liar you've become."

"A fib now and then suits the honestest of men," he answered, with a righteous look in his laughing eyes.

Byrd felt a little better the next morning. She hoped her mother had been silenced for some time.

"Oh, yum!" she exclaimed, as Mrs. Hamilton brought in a dish of steaming fried mush to the breakfast table, "what a treat for a hungry tummy. I don't know when I've tasted fried mush!"

"You wouldn't expect city folks to cook anything that's economical, even if it's good," began Mrs. Hamilton on the same everlasting note of criticism. "Why in the world you don't have things like cooked hominy and fried mush for breakfast I don't know. Larry said he just loved old fashioned breakfasts, but I suppose now that you're so swell, with a cook and all, you wouldn't stoop to mush!"

Byrd's gaiety during the rest of the meal was forced, for her mother had deprived her of her feeling of well being temporary though it was by just that allusion to Larry.

While she waited for her father to get the car out she went into the sitting room with a sinking heart and sat down.

She wondered if she had chosen the lesser of two evils by coming to Jacksonville. Parents let their daughters go with regret, she philosophized but received them back, she noticed with more regret. She knew she was far unhappier in Jacksonville than she had been in Cleveland, even separated then from Larry.

She realized now that her marriage had meant personal freedom and a release from the wasteful life she had outgrown when she left high school. Old friends and families that had been part of her background meant nothing to her except her past. The girls and boys she had known in school had settled down to repeat the dull experiences of the parents. They had little shops, little stores, little businesses of their own and their minds ran along the same little grooves.

Unconsciously her ideas had changed and she couldn't point them back to Jacksonville and its unprogressive atmosphere.

And the greatest shock of all was that there was no place for her in her father's house. A shelter—that was all. To slip back into a single existence, to take her former place in her old environment, was impossible.

The pallid lives of those around her got on her nerves. She wanted to reform the whole town, to wake them up, to stir them and tell

"But don't you see exactly what it meant?" Byrd cried in exasperation.

"Meant? It meant that you didn't either of you ever have any money."

"Exactly! Think of that!" she exploded.

"Not very provident of either of you," he said, unruffled.

"I couldn't help it," said Byrd, with tears starting in her eyes. "Larry never gave me money, except a few dollars at a time."

"Possibly not. But still by and large, a good deal of money, especially all that I sent you, must have passed through your hands. With possibly some—skill in management, a reserve fund for emergencies might have been created. Larry, as I've observed and as you've always felt, is a money maker. A spender, too. The two qualities often are found in the same person."

"I didn't realize that," said Byrd.

"Now you're very much like your mother in money matters," continued Mr. Hamilton, relentlessly. "You exaggerate the importance of it by thinking too much about it. Money is an essential, and the more you spend for the comforts of living, the more fun you're going to get out of life. If your husband sets a high standard of comfort, you go him one better, and set a little higher one. Understand?"

Byrd couldn't be coaxed back into a good humor. She was still hurt under the sting of her father's analysis of her troubles.

But Mr. Hamilton having started was bound to go on.

"What then, what do you think I could have done?" asked Byrd, truculently.

"As to that I'm not so sure," he said, contemptuously. "Statistics show that most marriages are a matter of adjustment. What one of the partners doesn't bring to the arrangement, the other must. For example, one brings a constant gaiety and good humor and the other constant gloom; one brings lavishness, the other thrift. But sometimes those qualities, if there is a certain amount of goodwill, can be modified in an amiable way."

Her father spoke a little further on the subject and Byrd knew she couldn't alter his point of view. He was, on the whole, very discouraging.

Then her own mind began to confirm what he had said. She could have done a thousand things differently. She could have coaxed Larry into spending more time with her in other places than those his friends selected for them; she could have refused to buy any more of her cent her hair sent them; she could have insisted on taking a house immediately far out, away from those people who kept using their apartments as a roadhouse; she could have piled her debts on top of his until the burden would have awakened in her the need to carry; instead, she had shielded him from his own errors as if he was a little child. Yes, that old saying that fire fights fire could be applied to most marriages.

She wondered how Larry would have acted if he had known she was standing their separation. He must be suffering as much as she but he had his business to absorb him in the day time and at night he had his friends, his game of poker and a complete freedom from espionage. He could turn in any hour he wanted, without any one inquiring what time he went to bed. And he was successful in building up his own business, for Mr. Polk had told her that he had begun to pay back the loan.

Well, if she went back to him now, she would be an admirer, that she was wrong and he was right, and after all, she had been right in the main issues. And if she returned with no further effort on his part or concessions to her point of view, things would be worse than ever. He would never take her seriously again. No, she decided, there really didn't seem any way of going back to him.

But Pat made it possible for her to return to Cleveland, and that was the first step. The letter came that morning in Pat's childish scrawl.

"Darling," she wrote, "Mr. Polk

is sending Chet to open up some branch offices for the bank in the small towns around the county, and he'll be away for some time, coming home only week-ends. And I are! Won't you please come and stay with me? Chet begs it and stays as big as marbles and he insists that they're not crocodile tears, either!"

Byrd's eyes were gleaming like violets drenched in dew as she looked up from the letter.

"From Larry?" asked her mother, inquisitively.

With a fleeting glance at her father, Byrd said:

"Yes, he thinks it's time I went back home."

Mrs. Hamilton gave her a suspicious look and set her lips firmly.

"And I agree with him!" she snapped.

The next morning Byrd arrived in Cleveland at the Union station.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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**NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT FOR THE COST OF IMPROVING UNIVERSITY STREET FROM OAK STREET TO LESLIE STREET.**

Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Salem, Oregon, will at or about 7:30 p. m., on the 21st day of January, 1929, or at any subsequent meeting of the said Council thereafter, in the Council chamber of the city hall of Salem, Oregon, proceed to assess upon and against each lot or part thereof or parcel of land liable therefor in its proportionate share of the cost of improving UNIVERSITY STREET FROM OAK STREET TO LESLIE STREET, in the City of Salem, Marion County, Oregon.

All persons interested in the said assessment are hereby notified to appear before the said Council at said time and place and present their objections, if any they have, to said assessment, and apply to said Council to equalize their proportionate share of the same.

By order of the Common Council this 7th day of January, 1929.

MARK POULSEN, City Recorder.

Date of first publication January 13, 1929.

Date of final publication January 16, 1929. J13-15-16

**NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT FOR THE COST OF IMPROVING COTTAGE STREET FROM RURAL AVENUE TO ELECTRIC AVENUE.**

Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Salem, Oregon, will at or about 7:30 p. m., on the 21st day of January, 1929, or at any subsequent meeting of the said Council thereafter, in the Council chamber of the city hall of Salem, Oregon, proceed to assess upon and against each lot or part thereof or parcel of land liable therefor in its proportionate share of the cost of improving COTTAGE STREET FROM RURAL AVENUE TO ELECTRIC AVENUE, in the City of Salem, Marion County, Oregon.

All persons interested in the said assessment are hereby notified to appear before the said Council at said time and place and present their objections, if any they have, to said assessment, and apply to said Council to equalize their proportionate share of the same.

By order of the Common Council this 7th day of January, 1929.

MARK POULSEN, City Recorder.

Date of first publication January 13, 1929.

Date of final publication January 16, 1929. J13-15-16

**NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT FOR THE COST OF IMPROVING COTTAGE STREET FROM RURAL AVENUE TO ELECTRIC AVENUE.**

Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Salem, Oregon, will at or about 7:30 p. m., on the 21st day of January, 1929, or at any subsequent meeting of the said Council thereafter, in the Council chamber of the city hall of Salem, Oregon, proceed to assess upon and against each lot or part thereof or parcel of land liable therefor in its proportionate share of the cost of improving COTTAGE STREET FROM RURAL AVENUE TO ELECTRIC AVENUE, in the City of Salem, Marion County, Oregon.

All persons interested in the said assessment are hereby notified to appear before the said Council at said time and place and present their objections, if any they have, to said assessment, and apply to said Council to equalize their proportionate share of the same.

By order of the Common Council this 7th day of January, 1929.

MARK POULSEN, City Recorder.

Date of first publication January 13, 1929.

Date of final publication January 16, 1929. J13-15-16

**NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT FOR THE COST OF IMPROVING LAUREL AVENUE FROM HIGHLAND AVENUE TO SPRUCE STREET.**

Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Salem, Oregon, will at or about 7:30 p. m., on the 21st day of January, 1929, or at any subsequent meeting of the said Council thereafter, in the Council chamber of the city hall of Salem, Oregon, proceed to assess upon and against each lot or part thereof or parcel of land liable therefor in its proportionate share of the cost of improving LAUREL AVENUE FROM HIGHLAND AVENUE TO SPRUCE STREET, in the City of Salem, Marion County, Oregon.

All persons interested in the said assessment are hereby notified to appear before the said Council at said time and place and present their objections, if any they have, to said assessment, and apply to said Council to equalize their proportionate share of the same.

By order of the Common Council this 7th day of January, 1929.

MARK POULSEN, City Recorder.

Date of first publication January 13, 1929.

Date of final publication January 16, 1929. J13-15-16

**NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT FOR THE COST OF IMPROVING LAUREL AVENUE FROM HIGHLAND AVENUE TO SPRUCE STREET.**

Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Salem, Oregon, will at or about 7:30 p. m., on the 21st day of January, 1929, or at any subsequent meeting of the said Council thereafter, in the Council chamber of the city hall of Salem, Oregon, proceed to assess upon and against each lot or part thereof or parcel of land liable therefor in its proportionate share of the cost of improving LAUREL AVENUE FROM HIGHLAND AVENUE TO SPRUCE STREET, in the City of Salem, Marion County, Oregon.

All persons interested in the said assessment are hereby notified to appear before the said Council at said time and place and present their objections, if any they have, to said assessment, and apply to said Council to equalize their proportionate share of the same.

By order of the Common Council this 7th day of January, 1929.

MARK POULSEN, City Recorder.

Date of first publication January 13, 1929.

Date of final publication January 16, 1929. J13-15-16

**NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT FOR THE COST OF IMPROVING CAPITOL STREET FROM OAK STREET TO SOUTH MILL CREEK.**

Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Salem, Oregon, will at or about 7:30 p. m., on the 21st day of January, 1929, or at any subsequent meeting of the said Council thereafter, in the Council chamber at the city hall of Salem, Oregon, proceed to assess upon and against each lot or part thereof or parcel of land liable therefor in its proportionate share of the cost of improving CAPITOL STREET FROM OAK STREET TO SOUTH MILL CREEK, in the City of Salem, Marion County, Oregon.

All persons interested in the said assessment are hereby notified to appear before the said Council at said time and place and present their objections, if any they have, to said assessment, and apply to said Council to equalize their proportionate share of the same.

By order of the Common Council this 7th day of January, 1929.

MARK POULSEN, City Recorder.

Date of first publication January 13, 1929.

Date of final publication January 16, 1929. J13-15-16

**NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT FOR THE COST OF IMPROVING CAPITOL STREET FROM OAK STREET TO SOUTH MILL CREEK.**

Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Salem, Oregon, will at or about 7:30 p. m., on the 21st day of January, 1929, or at any subsequent meeting of the said Council thereafter, in the Council chamber at the city hall of Salem, Oregon, proceed to assess upon and against each lot or part thereof or parcel of land liable therefor in its proportionate share of the cost of improving CAPITOL STREET