Married Flirts

by MABEL McELLIOTT

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CHAPTER VIII

THE evening, on the whole, was far from being a success for Gypsy. She tried flirting mildly with Marko, just to make Tom angry. But it was a thankless business. She didn't really want to quarrel with Tom. The very thought of it turned her just a little weak. They had been so happy. What serpent had entered, so suddenly, into their little Eden?

It was one o'clock. It was two. It was three. And the music went on and the smoke gathered in clouds and the glasses were filled and emptied, filled and emptied again. Her head began to ache and her spirits flagged. Looking from one face to another, she wondered idly how they stood it, night after night. Why, she was only 22, strong, almost without nerves, and yet she tired of it quickly. Marko, who made the social rounds so briskly, was 50, and his skin was stretched tight around his eyes, he seemed to have unexpected stores of strength to draw upon. Marko, reflected Gypsy, was rather wonderful!

At three-ten (and how Gypsy blessed her for it!) young Mrs. Wiltford said they must go—there was something about an early start on the morrow. They were going south... Hot Springs. The party began to disintegrate.

Gypsy was almost speechless with silence when the taxi deposited them at their own door. Tom helped her out, without a word. Still silent, he unlocked the door and stood aside to let her into the dark apartment. Gypsy switched on the hall light, yawned, dropped her wrap into a chair. Then she hastily picked it up again. It was all very well for the idle daughters of the rich to behave so with their party clothes. As for her, she must take excellent care of the few she owned, because it would be a long time before she would be able to afford others.

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Breakfast was a dreary affair. The Weavers were scrupulously polite to each other.

"More toast, Tom?"

"No thanks." Business of consulting his watch. Just a distant politeness.

"We might," Gypsy reflected gloomily, "have been married for centuries."

He came back into the living room with his overcoat on, his gray soft hat in his hand, to say good-bye. Gypsy's lip trembled a little. This—this really was dreadful! Where was Tom? Where was her own boy? She couldn't find him, in this stiff and formal stranger.

"It's Dinah's night on," she told him. "Dinner at seven."

"Right. At Seven." And he was gone.

She sat down and cried. She couldn't help it. Well, she had no time for this. A business woman-wife didn't. She'd have to hurry. Bath. Cold cream. Dash of lip stick. Heavens, she looked a wreck! What circles she had under her eyes!

Well, there was no help for it. Maybe the circles made her look pale and interesting. She hoped so. She lost herself, as she rushed into her dark blue knitted dress, in a dream of intense dramatic interest. In the dream, she wasted away to nothing and her husband looked on, wringing his hands and begging to be forgiven.

On the subway she read her morning paper. It seemed to her there were more than the usual number of divorce stories, although goodness knew there were always enough of them. She read them with newly sharpened interest. Mr. B— of Riverside drive was marrying his beautiful secretary as soon as his Reno stay was over. Mrs. W— of Yonkers was getting her decree and shortly thereafter marrying a Slavic nobleman.

It was, thought Gypsy, frightening. Didn't anybody stay married nowadays? She had never thought of divorce, before this, in connection with Tom and herself. But her thoughts were morbid this morning.

"Nonsense. Nothing has happened," she told herself, robustly. "Why, we haven't even had a cross word." No, but she had discovered how angry she could be with Tom. Why, last night when Hilda Blanchard had been so possessive with him, she had wanted to claw her eyes out—and Tom's too, for being such a goose.

Jealousy, Gypsy decided, was a dreadful thing. It was so unreasoning, it was such a bitter, black emotion. It was like a disease. She had had a taste of it, before, when Tom had taken Vera Gray to lunch. She had told herself, when that incident had blown over, that nothing like this would ever happen to her again. She would be calm, judicial, she would use her head instead of her heart.

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But apparently Tom was the sort of man women ran after. She looked gloomily down a vista in which she rescued him from dozens of affairs. "I can't stand it!" she told herself, in despair. "I won't."

That evening, when Dinah had cleared away and was clattering happily in the kitchen, dropping aluminum saucepans with vigor and slamming spoons down upon the metal topped table, the Weavers "had it out."

It all began quietly. Gypsy started it with a remark about Marko. Tom said something cutting, and she flung back at him, all her good resolutions gone.

"I noticed Hilda Blanchard held on to you all evening," she said bitterly.

"That's good." Tom's face was flushed. "You were listening to everything that old chap said. You didn't pay any attention to me."

It was terrible...terrible. They quarreled in low voices, so that they should not be heard above Dinah's clamor, but even in the kitchen, she stopped slamming kettles about and stood to listen, hands akimbo, shaking her woolly head in sadness.

"Such nice young folks, too," Dinah mourned.

"I didn't want to go, anyway," Tom stormed. "You made me. It was your idea. We don't belong with that crowd. We can't keep up with them."

"You liked it well enough, once you were there," she reminded him. "You had a good time. You danced... you flirted..."

"What would you have me do?" Tom demanded. He couldn't, he said, be rude to the girl. She was darned attractive, anyhow.

This turned the knife in Gypsy's side.

"Easy enough for her to be attractive," she flared. "She's probably got a personal maid, heaps of clothes, charge accounts everywhere..."

"Oho, so that's it!" Tom stood up. "I suppose the idea is that I'm spoiling your looks, tying you down to drudgery."

"No...no...I didn't mean that."

She began stormily to cry. She was so angry, so furious with everyone, the world, Tom, and herself in articular. What had happened to them both?

His manner changed. He came over and knelt down beside her, taking her small hands in his. He gave her a clean handkerchief.

"Don't cry, baby," he said, very gently. "We're both being such fools, and all about nothing."

(To Be Continued)

News of Dorena

DORENA, Feb. 12.—(Special).—Miss Naomi Doolittle is visiting at her home here after being away for the winter in Salem, where she was employed. She plans to take another position soon.

Jos. Spahr of Star fractured a bone in his leg Sunday while at his work getting out poles near here.

The Happy Circle Sewing club presents its play "Go Slow, Mary," a 3-act comedy, at the club house Feb. 17. The following make up the cast:

Billy Abbey, Grace Smith; Mary Abbey, Mrs. Lyon Lawrence; Mrs. Beldon, Mrs. Collins; Sally Carter, Mrs. Thrasher; Harry Stevens, Mrs. Steele; Burt Childs, Mrs. Orien Land; Bobby Berton, Mrs. Doolittle; Dolly Berdon, Mildred Smith; Katie, Mrs. Otho Van Scholack; Danny Grub, Mrs. Wagner; Murphy, Mrs. Higginbotham.

Lynx Hollow

LYNX HOLLOW, Feb. 12.—(Special).—The Community club supper was changed to a penny fair owing to illness of one member of the Poole quartet and the entertainment was furnished by local people. A large crowd attended.

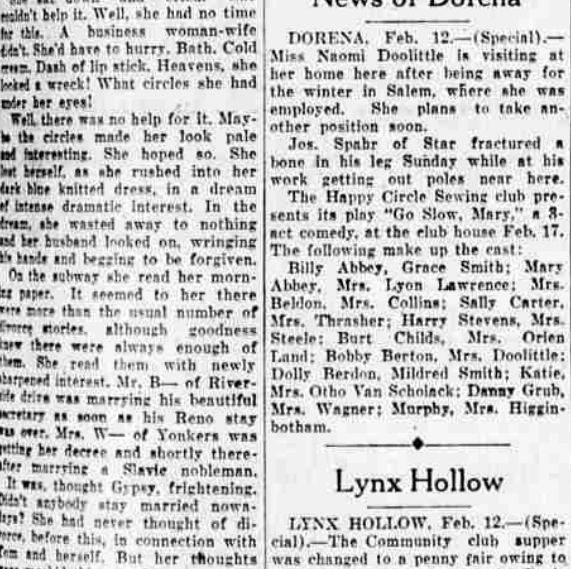
Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Helen Scott visited at the Kingsland home Thursday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. George Nichols and two children moved into the Bill Griggs house this week.

Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Jackson spent the week-end at Cheshire visiting relatives.

Miss Francis Parks came Wednesday afternoon and helped assist with the program Wednesday evening.

LEAVES IN GAY COLORED SCRAPS



INDIAN SUMMER PATTERN 595

Indian Summer, suggestive of autumn leaves with all their gay colors, is as lovely a quilt as the season it is named for. This patchwork quilt affords an excellent opportunity for using up scraps—an opportunity which the quiltmaker is not likely to miss. The leaves can be done in all sorts of gay scraps, each leaf being of a different material as shown. Though designed entirely for patchwork, the leaves could be done in applique if desired.

Pattern 595 comes to you with complete, simple instructions for cutting, sewing and finishing, together with yardage chart, diagram of quilt to help arrange the blocks for single and double bed size, and a diagram of block which serves as a guide for placing the patches and suggests contrasting materials.

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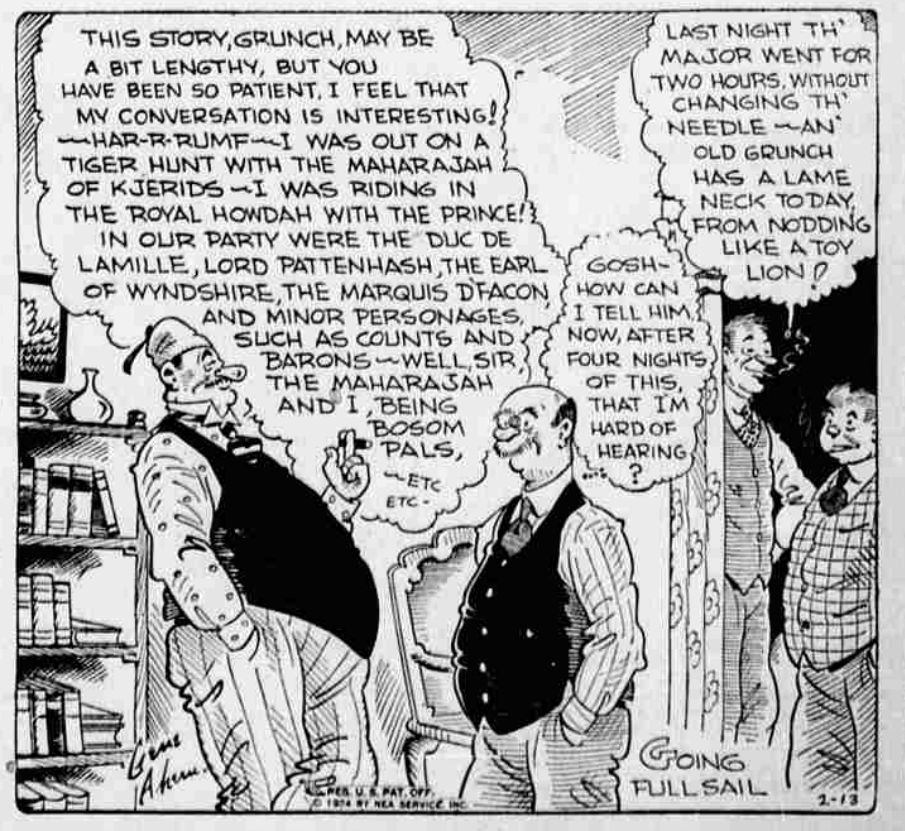
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