

Married Flirts

by MABEL McELLIOTT
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CHAPTER XV

THE family was coming to Sun day tea. That had to be lived through. Not for worlds, vowed Gypsy passionately to herself, would she let them see what had happened to her marriage. They were not to suspect that the very foundations of her world were crumbling around her.

She dragged herself from bed at 6 o'clock. She hadn't slept for hours, anyway. There was no use trying to. She dressed, glancing quickly at herself in the mirror. Why she had aged overnight, she told herself, Tom still slept heavily but gullylessly, on the daybed. He had the quilt which Gypsy had given him. He looked somewhat forlorn and defenseless in his sleep. Young, troubled, pale.

But she would not forgive him—no, not she! He had betrayed an unwritten pact the day before. Languid, heavy-eyed, she went about the business of preparing breakfast. She had to eat something, she reminded herself. Even if Tom didn't love her any more, even if it didn't matter to anyone whether she lived or died (she was ignoring a large family of Morells for the moment) she had to have her breakfast.

Surprisingly enough, she brought an appetite to it and sat, perched on a white painted kitchen stool, sipping her hot coffee. What a fool she had been to think flying home the night before, that she would tell Tom she was working for Marko—that his money had bought the platinum watch! Now she would keep that affair to herself. She needed, she told herself coldly, every penny she could earn. If Tom were going to behave in this unforseen, this outrageous fashion, surely she had a right to earn money in any honorable way which presented itself.

After a time he wandered out, looking big-eyed and sleep-sodden and sheepish.

"Good morning."

Gypsy's reply was glacially polite. "Will you have some coffee?" She glanced out of the window with studied indifference. "Your orange juice is in the icebox."

"No, thanks." He didn't say his head ached but he looked it. At last Tom's composure broke. "Look, Gyp, he said placatingly. "Let's have it out. I can't stand this."

"It's none of my doing, Gypsy thought rebelliously. I didn't ramble away my money. It's no fault of mine. But she listened to him, nevertheless. She could not entirely steel her heart against him. He'd been at a loose end, he said, the day before. She was busy—she didn't have anything to do. Some of the fellows had gone over to the club—and a game had started. At first he hadn't meant to get in. But he had. He had won, to begin with. He had changed. He hadn't been able to stop.

"How much?" She didn't look at him.

"Seventy dollars." His voice was very low.

"Oh, Tommy." But the word was enough. The ice around her heart had cracked open. She was in his arms and she was crying, and he was smoothing her hair and telling her he never would again. She knew that, didn't she? And he was a bound—he knew that. She was wasting her time with him.

Gypsy put her hand over his mouth. "You're not to say that—ever." She felt strong and maternal and brave. Her love went out to him like a tide.

So it was that the Morells, trooping in at half past four, found the vision of a united pair. Gypsy, her brown curls shining in a bright frock, and Tom with his arm around her.

So the storm blew over for the moment and the little domestic bark was steered into safe waters. But it was hard, making up for Tom's losses. They felt the pinch of it all through January, and though Gypsy said nothing, Tom felt it none the less and said to himself grimly that he had learned his lesson.

Gypsy's Saturdays at Marko's continued. All her fears had vanished now. After that first Saturday she saw him only once or twice. Her conscience no longer troubled her. She was getting through the work splendidly. The richness and the comfort of the big room received her agreeably whenever she came. Bates had taken to serving her tea. Gypsy would look up to see the silver tray with its delicate china and linen before her.

"Mr. Broughton said you were to have it, Madam."

On the fourth Saturday she had planned to leave rather early. As usual, she had told Tom a white lie about meeting someone for shopping. But the difficulty of making Saturday a permanent engagement was growing.

At last she put away pencils and pads, covered the typewriter and resigned to its cave of darkness. She was just about to ring for Bates, to secure once more the custody of her hat and coat, when she heard a familiar voice in the drawing room.

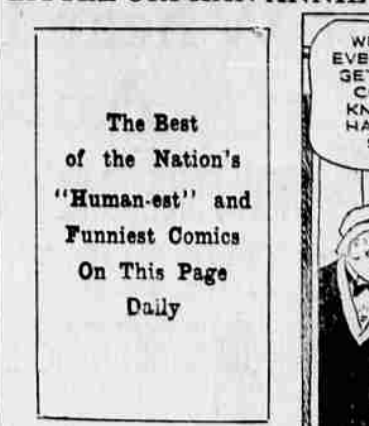
"Don't trouble, Bates," she heard Lila say. "I'll wait right here. Mr. Broughton will be home directly. He said so."

Gypsy's hands flew to her throat. Lila, of all people! Oh, she didn't want to be found here. It wouldn't matter what she said or how she tried to explain, Lila simply would not understand. Her eyebrows would go up, she would look quizzical and sophisticated and amused. No, she couldn't—wouldn't bear it!

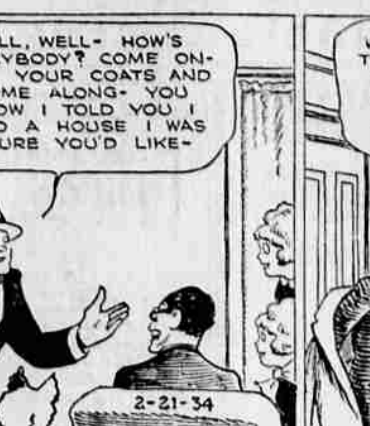
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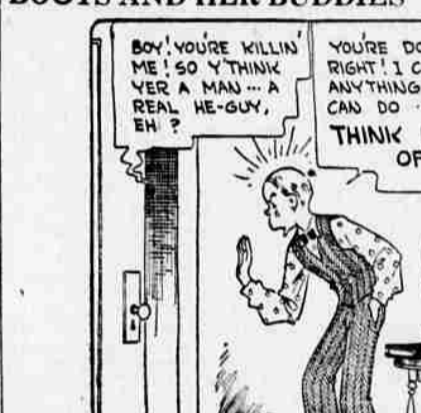
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Painting of Camp Given Camp Creek

CAMP CAPE CREEK, CCC, Feb. 20.—(Special).—A large oil painting of the Cape Creek camp was presented to the company Friday evening by C. Beauchamp of Newport. The painting shows the camp building and surrounding forest, with the coast line below giving a contrasting color with its surf breaking against the dark rocks.

The painting was unveiled at a camp dance with a number of guests from neighboring towns attending. All commented upon the likeness and faithfulness of the details reproduced on canvas. The huge painting measures 34 1/2 by 8 feet and will hang in the recreation hall.

A buffet supper was served in the dining hall following the dance. Several members of the company took part in the program.

FASCINATING NEEDLEWORK



In every collection of antique hooked rugs, cats, dogs and lambs are bound to find a place. Though a lamb is not exactly a household pet, it seems to add a cozy touch to a home. Certainly this lamb looks as if it were ready to fit comfortably into any room. It could be done in white or a light grey or tan, which can be set off effectively with a mottled background. A rug of any desired size can be made and the corners are adjustable and can even be omitted if desired and used on a chair back set.

Pattern, 635 contains a transfer pattern of a lamb 21 inches long and four corners; complete directions and color schemes for a hooked rug.

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