

SPITE MARRIAGE

by Katharine Haviland Taylor

SYNOPSIS: Marsha Moore had thought herself in love with Geoffrey Tarleton. But he introduced her to the "new Mrs. Tarleton," and she married Bob Powers out of spite. Now Geoffrey has come to call on Marsha, and although Bob has gone to the village, Marsha feels the danger that he may discover the truth. And Marsha loves Bob now, and does not want him to know.

Chapter 20

Marsha joined him, wearing a scarlet frock that made her a flame; she called from the doorway. "Why didn't you smoke, Geoff? There are things on that low table by you."

She settled in a deep chair near the hearth and again he sat down. He fumbled among the meekish brands that filled the humidor, lit the captured cigarette, stared at the gorgeously colored flames.

"Dramatic voice you have," said Geoffrey, "powerfully dramatic and sweet voice, the one that can sway a man, who hates you, Marsha."

Once she felt herself to be decorated by a hate that grew to love, or she had been "amused" at it. Now she wanted peace; a pleasant relation with any human whose elbow even brushed hers in a hurried passing.

"Must you hate me, Geoff?" she asked gently. "I would really so much rather you did not."

He turned upon her suddenly. "You know," he accused, "how it was with me. I always fluttered around other candles, but then you always let other chaps sing their wings at your flame. We were even, there! But I thought—you made me

eyes, his stricken face, made further words unnecessary.

Bob turned then, toward the door and for an out-door man whose tread was sure, he was pitifully uncertain of motion.

"Bob!" Marsha appealed. He did not respond and she realized that, no matter how physically close they could stand, hereafter, he would ever be beyond her reach.

Geoffrey was smiling. "No end sorry," he said, as Bob disappeared. She covered her face with her trembling hands. He moved closer to pat her shoulder. He felt her shrink. "After the divorce," he said with a gentleness rare for him, "You'll look me up? We won't lose any more time. I won't trust you again for fear you might think me married to anyone who happened to be in the same room, on the same block."

"Don't!" she appealed. She dropped her hands and he was shocked by the change in her face. She smiled slowly, stiffly. "You don't understand—" she faltered, "I don't know how to make you understand. But you must believe this, even though you don't believe in love. I'm deeply in love with my husband. There will never be anyone else for me."

"Perhaps he is through with me; I think very probably he is. But that wouldn't make me seek warmth elsewhere. I couldn't, having known him, let another man so much as touch my hand. Will you try to understand it's over between us? And will you go?"

Geoffrey's ideas for revenge faded. He was hurt, but, too, he was awed. And he had hurt her, whose sincerity had put within him a new sort of love.

"God," he said brutally, loudly, "I am sorry!"

She made no response. He turned to the door. At the door he paused. "If you want anything I can give you?"

She shook her head violently. He heard a weak, "But thank you."

He saw her sink to a small stool by the hearth; he left her crouched there and staring into the flames.

As he reached the hall he heard above him the hard tread of some one who must pace a room. He was leaving an inferno, which would haunt him, he knew.

If he could reach Powers to make Powers believe that truth that had grown in Marsha, would that help? He doubted it. A man of Powers sort probably could not forgive a woman who married him in order to keep from wearing the limp robe of the jilted; who married him, too, in order to tell another man that she did not mourn his having married.

"Lord, what a mess!" he murmured.

There was sleet in the air as he stepped out. The wind was bitter and cutting. He looked back at the small house, ominously silent. "And now what for them?" he asked of himself. "And their next move?"

Divorce, he presumed. He had never before forgotten himself through others. But Marsha's face had made him see how it was with her. She had looked old, and agony was in her eyes, and he had learned what love may be by looking in them. Her pain mattered, not his. (To be continued)

"So I understand," said Bob. He turned to Marsha with a question: "You thought," he asked, "that Tarleton was married, that night when—you accepted me?"

"Yes, Bob, but—" her tone was strident, frantic. But she could make no sound on his set, icy calm; his determination to speak; to dominate the scene.

"It was Tarleton's younger brother who was married, Marsha," Bob went on; "it was Tarleton's sister-in-law whom you met that night. I thought everyone knew of the marriage. It was talked of, considerably, a few months ago."

"I've often been a pirate," Geoffrey admitted with a wry smile and a raise of brows, "but believe me, Powers, I regret hurting you through this affair. However, now that we all understand."

"I don't!" Marsha flung out unsteadily, "we don't! Bob—"

Marsha stepping back to a world of ruin, the world she had thought the one world, raised her shoulders, her dark, arched brows. "You would not believe me now, under oath, Bob. I presume?" she questioned.

"I prefer, if you don't mind, to discuss that when we're alone," he answered. But he had made his reply; the set of his chin, his bitter

Tomorrow—"A Duck Squabble"



Sundown Stories

PLENTY OF TROUBLE

By Mary Graham Bonner

Willy Nilly did not know what he would do. The hens and chickens, roosters, ducks, pigs and dogs from all the barnyards in the neighboring countryside had come to Puddle Muddle.

Top Notch knew more than he had said. He had admitted that he invited these guests, but he had said he would explain when he had time.

Why had that rooster asked all these creatures at once? Willy Nilly wondered. And why had he wanted to entertain when they were just having a little time free of interruptions and trouble?

Willy Nilly was annoyed, too, that he had been a vain little man and had taken off the adhesive tapes with which he was going to fix his ears so they would stay back. Now he didn't know when he would be able to give them any attention.

But he hadn't time to think of this now. Here was Puddle Muddle simply over-run with all the animals; and the Puddle Muddlers were around to see what was going on.

Mr. and Mrs. Quacko Duck were angry now because the visiting ducks had discovered some bags of grain and were helping themselves. "Those are our bags of grain," quacked Mrs. Quacko angrily.

"Leave them alone, quack, quack," shouted Mr. Quacko Duck.

"You haven't any manners," said one of the visiting ducks.

"I have the most perfect duck manners," quacked Mr. Duck in an angry voice. "I didn't invite you here."

"You rude duck," quacked another visiting duck and gave Mrs. Quacko a slap with her wing.

Tomorrow—"A Duck Squabble"

ACROSS

1. Deadly
6. Golf instructor; colloq.
9. Age
12. Music drama
13. Male sheep
14. Short for a girl's name
15. French city
16. Work
17. Things that match
18. Saltwater
19. Platform
20. Cover
21. Fit one inside another
22. Insect
23. Things to be done
24. Ate sparingly
25. That part of the iris bordering the pupil of the eye
26. Enlarges
27. Curled fabric
28. Spanish house
29. English river
30. Cattle entrance
31. Burning
32. Worship
33. Wool yarn
34. Nest of a bird of prey

Solution of Saturday's Puzzle

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DOWN

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2. South American river
3. White ant
4. Operatic airs
5. Final
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