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A BIT OF NONSENSE

By JOAN M. GRAY.

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"Now, where on earth did Nim get the idea?" Bink Spaulding asked Nim's brother, as they stood staring down upon Nim's bobbed head, turned adoringly upward toward the words which a long-haired, lanky individual was passionately putting forth. "We three start off on a tramp as usual and she announces that a man with the most wonderful ideas in the world is coming along and then she prances off down the hill with him and leaves us here without any idea at all."

"Oh, Nim's Nim," Nim's brother said, unruffled, "and you are you. You let her walk all over you and only sputter when she steps off and tries her footing on someone else. If you'd only shake her—once in a while—"

"Oh, for heaven's sake! You know how it is with me, George. I'd rather have Nim walk all over me than—"

"I know, all right," snorted George, "and Nim knows. Listen to that," as Nim's adorable laugh floated up the hill to them. "That girl needs a darn good lesson."

"This is the third time she's lugged that bird along when I asked her to come out here with me—"

"And his hands aren't overly clean, either—"

"I bet he's only got that one collar to his name, and it's celluloid at that."

"Bink, if you only had sense enough to do it! Listen. Get Madame Nonsense on the line and play her against the idea. Show Nim that you have an outside 'interest' and see what happens. Will you?"

Nim's laugh floated up to them at that moment, and Bink swore that he would.

Nim, ready now to laugh with Bink over the Great Idea, found Bink in a sort of trance with Madame Nonsense. And he left with Madame, still in the same trance. But he came quickly out of it when he had left her at her door, and with a muttered "shew" of relief, returned to Nim's tea table. Once there he manfully raved over Madame's charm until Nim disdainfully left him for the upper regions.

Thereafter Bink talked Nonsense, thought Nonsense, and desired Nonsense only—apparently. Long after the Big Idea had said good-by forever to Nim and had promised to still love her when they met again in the Great Beyond, did Bink continue to worship Nonsense.

"But what does he see in that frowsy old thing?" raged Nim to George. "She is forty if she's a day."

"Oh, well, we men like someone with experience—someone who is ready to please us and think of our comfort before anything else. Madame surely thinks of Bink's happiness, all right, which is more than you do."

"Well, is he thinking of mine? I mean—" Nim could have bitten her tongue with vexation. "Heavens," she shrugged, recovering. "I don't care what he does. Come on, George. Dad's waiting out there for us."

Madame was describing the vision of a departed Red Man, when Nim, having left George and her dad behind, came swiftly into view. Bink, embarrassed, changed from one foot to the other, dislodging Madame, who was rather leaning on him, and Madame, slipping slightly, sat down with a thump on the edge of the hill.

As Madame went down her wrath came up, and when Madame rose, her wrath went still higher. With her golden hair hanging a little to one side, she used words which her association with things spiritual had not taught her to use. Then, feeling lonesome with all of them lost upon Bink Spaulding, she stalked down the path, passed an open-mouthed Nim, and disappeared into the grove.

"I hope she bumps into a tree," muttered a miserable, red-faced Bink.

But the worst seemed to be coming, for Nim, with a rush, was before him.

"Bink Spaulding, I should think you'd want to hide your face! Making love to a woman old enough to be your mother, and a vulgar, swearing, rough, commonplace—oh, Bink, I think you're horrid!"

Bink wasn't ready yet, and Bink had seen a suspicious tremble in Nim's adorable mouth.

"She—Nim, how could I know. I—"

"Bingham, you don't really care for her? After—"

Nim was angry. If he thought he could have affairs with all the old peroxide hens for miles around, after asking her three times to marry him, he was mistaken. She turned and stalked away from him.

"Nim, you come back here and kiss me," said Bink, appearing much braver than he felt, and Nim, so unusual was the command, obeyed.

Fifteen minutes later she asked suspiciously: "Bink, did you ever kiss that—her?"

"Ye gods!" cried Bink, lifting his head. "Nonsense! What do you think I am? But what about your big idea? He—"

"He's crazy, and you know it. Bink Spaulding, you ought to know that if anyone but you should try to kiss me—"

Bink was ready to be stepped on again, but not to be walked over.

"No more big ideas unless I'm in on 'em!"

"Um-um. And no Nonsense, either, Bink."

And as a little Nonsense and a few Big Ideas, shared by two, can accomplish all sorts of wonderful things, no doubt Bink and his Nim were very happy forever after.

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