

# SPITE MARRIAGE

by Katharine Haviland Taylor

**SYNOPSIS:** Marsha and Bob are at the brink of divorce, due to Bob's stubborn misunderstanding of Marsha's friendship with Geoffrey Tarrant. But Bob's mother tells him of an incurable disease, and Bob decides that he and Marsha must pretend happiness until his mother is gone. It is Christmas time; Bob leaves December 28 to finish his work in Mexico.

## Chapter 27 PRESENTS

"I WANT to go on with my dressing. If you'll please leave," Marsha said distantly. Bob nodded, moved toward the door.

In his own room he stood by a window fingering the heavy cord that tied back the old-fashioned hangings. The early winter dusk had shrouded the small court which indented itself between two houses, a court that, upon the brightest days knew the sun for only a fleeting space at glaring noon.

The space had depressed him as a little boy and it still could and did; the city grit which scratched under heel and that could never be quite swept away, the air that was both soiled and frail and that had traveled so far inches in so many years; the sort of moist, tropic and evil looking plants that in summer would grow in the shaded spot.

Occasionally he had—with a smile at himself for his own self-pity and that which he deemed his "rather yellow habit of analogy"—likened the court to his life; he had worked much of the time in remote spots that kept him far from people of kindred spirit. He had worked steadily, sometimes grudgingly, since his college days and the moments of sun had been short and few.

Then Marsha had come and he had felt his "court days" were done and he had gone almost mad from happiness. . . . and then the clouds had so thickened that the court, in contrast, seemed bright.

He had lost Marsha. He would lose his mother, and he must walk the rest of the way alone; his ill-luck to be a one-woman man.

"Going weak again," he said under breath and sharply. He saw self-pity as the most sapping of all evil habits; a destructive habit which laid low hope and usefulness. He must not let himself go that way, he reminded.

Turning, he heard a light tap on his door. His "Come in, please," was answered by Marsha's pushing the door open.

She crossed the room. "If it will make you happier," she said, and as if she had learned her message word by word, "I'll take your money. But I don't need it."

"I thought for cigars and things—"

"I'm not smoking much; your mother thinks I smoked rather too much."

"But you were so dependent—"

"No. I have other things now. I don't miss smoking," she broke in to say; "but if you'd rather I took your money, I'll take it."

"You've been so wonderfully good," he said, "and kind!"

"No, really I have not!"

"DON'T you think I should engage a nurse-companion before I leave? I've thought it would be too much for you; the constant strain. You should get out."

"No, please don't. I like it this way. I'd much rather you didn't import anyone else. We get along beautifully. Bob—"

"My dear!" he murmured. He could not help that nor did he want to; in this role she was perfect and he was certain that she did not pretend in it.

"I wanted you to see what I have for your mother. . . . Christmas, you know. . . . and we'll have to give each other things, you know, because of her."

"Yes, I have your present. You needn't hint any more!"

She laughed a trifle unsteadily. His banter had carried her swiftly to the dead days.

"I have something splendid for you!" she assured him proudly.

He followed her into her room. She brought from her closet various packets; he saw, with a rise of tenderness, that she enjoyed opening them for him, that she was as excited as a child would have been.

"They're beautifully wrapped," he said; "it's a shame to make you open them."

"Oh, but I want to! It's no trouble. I've wanted to show them to you for some time, but for some reason I rather lacked courage. I thought it might bore you. Then I thought if I took your money, you could look

at my presents. I do want to know whether you think she'll like them."

He stared on a lavender dressing gown; he who didn't know buckram from chiffon fingered it. But people did that, he'd seen them doing it. "It's lovely!" he assured her.

"She said, softly, shyly, "I put things in the pockets. I thought it would surprise her."

She brought forth a matching handkerchief, a little lavender bottle of smelling salts, a small, ivory elephant; a tiny, gold scissors, a packet of solitaire cards in a lavender leather case and from the last pocket she brought a silver chain that was studded with amethysts.

He was deeply touched, but he said, as lightly as he could, "I would think now that even you could use a little of what you see as my money."

"But Bob, the investment wasn't great. Not as great as I wanted to have it. The chain was my mother's. I wanted your mother to have it. I never was nice enough to wear it. And I thought she'd like knowing I wanted her to have it, you see?"

He turned to her; she was looking up questioningly.

"I'll never be able to thank you," he murmured thickly and then, rather slowly, he lifted one of her hands to hold it against his lips. He saw her lips tremble; he thought she said "Thank you," but later, remembering mistily, he could not be certain of that.

HE did remember that she had hurried on to tell him, with lips that still trembled a little, that she had, too, for his mother an assortment of very old-fashioned plants in small pots; that she had thought his mother would like them on a window sill, and that she had scoured New York to find them. . . . mignonette, and heart's ease, beans-and-chickens and such. . . . and that she'd loved doing it.

"They're sweet," she said; "Hannah has them in a corner of the pantry where she's certain your mother won't find them. I visit them each day! And if anything happened to anyone of them, I think I'd expire! I'll show them to you tomorrow," she ended shyly, "if you have time."

"I'll have time," he promised, heart swelling. He stared down at her, flushed, happy, young. Where was the girl who had drawled, "Bob, darling old thing—do get me an orchid or two, with a few valley lilies thrown in for luck! You know?" And how could this new creature have suffered Geoffrey Tarrant's soiled caresses? But she had. The dinner gong rang as he stiffened and grew rigid from recollection.

"Lord, and I'm not even changed!" he murmured.

"Could I put studs in for you?" she appealed in little above a whisper.

He answered loudly, chilly, with, "I can do very well for myself, thank you." Her face changed, she grew pale; then she flushed hotly. And as he closed the door he saw that she had stood, motionless, looking after him.

She had thought, "To have you back! To have you back! I want you so; I don't think I can live without you!"

Hurrying with his dressing he decided he must, hereafter, avoid such moments when he could. Otherwise (why the devil must ties stick at the back of a collar?) he would some day let go, sweep her into his arms and hold her close. He would tell her that nothing mattered but having her whom he loved, despite everything she was, was not. But he must not think of that!

He met Marsha at the head of the stair.

"We're frightfully late!" she said with compunction.

She explained breathlessly, to Mrs. Powers, that they had talked and forgotten the hour. Mrs. Powers nodded, smiled. Bob, having settled his mother, pushed a chair beneath Marsha and, leaning down and over her, he kissed her cheek. "She's quite a marvel!" he said to his mother, (Bartholomew's tray tilted dangerously!) "and we know it, don't we?"

"Very gay," Bartholomew reported in the kitchen, "and he's a show-in' his feeling as a gentleman should—and would. Quite. If you'd ask me, an infatuation and of the kind that will last."

"And what did he do?" asked Ella whose cap had slid to a rakish angle.

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Bob leaves, tomorrow, for Mexico.

# HOUSE WILL MISS FAST WISECRACKS OF LORING BLACK

## Retirement of Brooklyn Representative Removes Prize Jester of Capital Hill — Was Leader in Repeal.

By HERBERT PLUMMER  
WASHINGTON—There was more to an announcement that Loring Black of New York was retiring from the house than the mere fact that a veteran of 12 years in congress had decided to quit.

Departure of the 48-year-old, white-haired, diminutive representative of Brooklyn from the house removes from capitol hill its prize wisecracker.

Black was the type who refused to be serious except on the rarest occasions. A master of satire and facile of tongue, he is credited with having one of the brightest and keenest minds in the house.

But with all his fun-making and jests Black figured actively in much serious legislation. He was out in front among leaders of the forces for repeal. He consistently fought what he termed extravagant farm legislation.

Mrs. Norton's "Voice" He was an ardent foe of the provision in the state department's bill to protect government records, which

he claimed was aimed at press censorship, and succeeded in having it eliminated.

Black was the right hand man of Mrs. Mary Norton of New Jersey, chairman of the house committee on the District of Columbia. Mrs. Norton, the first woman member of congress ever to hold the chairmanship of a major congressional committee, relied on Black as her chief lieutenant.

The hurry-burry and confusion in the house at times makes it virtually impossible for the voices of the congresswomen to be heard. On such occasions the voice of Black was that of Mrs. Norton.

It was a familiar sight to see him in the well of the house pinch-hitting for the lady from New Jersey. Much of the success the District committee enjoyed during the last session was due to Black.

Some Black Sayings It was in his wisecracks and his ability to amuse himself and his colleagues by part observations, however, where Black was at his best. Witty and satirical jibes literally rolled off his tongue.

"The brain trust has got brains," he once told the house, "They're on the government payroll where the politicians can't get."

Perhaps his most celebrated jibe was aimed at the Wickersham commission during the Hoover administration in its report on prohibition:

"A group of weather-beaten little travelers, headed by Rip Van Wickersham, sought shelter in the White House. . . . creaking and groaning pitifully. 'Master, we are Wet.' Hoover drew himself proudly to his full height. . . . waved his arm over them, saying: 'Brethren, ye are Dry.' Dry they became, as dust, and blew away, never more to be seen by mortal man."

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# SINCLAIR'S UTOPIA PLAN WINS VOTES AS PRIMARY NEAR

By HERBERT LUNDY  
(United Press Staff Correspondent.)  
SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 3.—(UP)—Upton Sinclair, the author who dredged the depths of politics and industry for a quarter-century, emerged an important figure today in California's tempestuous primary campaign.

Endorsed by what he calls his "people plan" to end poverty and promising freedom for Tom Mooney, Sinclair, socialist, stands in a fair way of winning the Democratic nomination as governor.

The gray-haired, keen-eyed handsome man of 55, whose pen pulled him out of New York's East Side, is making his fifth and most colorful bid for public office.

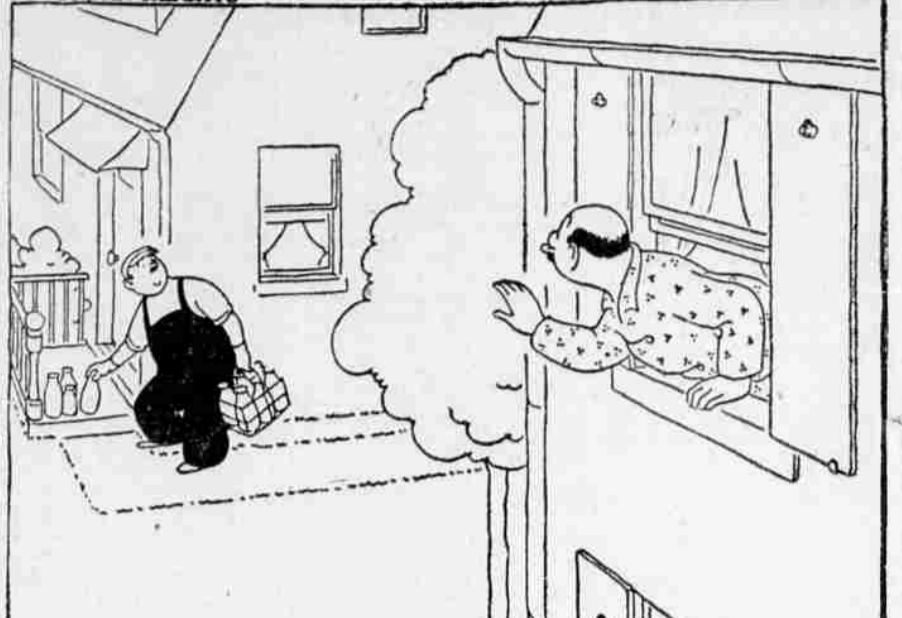
He is backed by 50,000 Los Angeles citizens, known as the "Utopians." He has a large personal following elsewhere in the state. By registering as a Democrat he gained new support in that party.

As a socialist, Sinclair ran for congress in New Jersey in 1906, for congress in California in 1920, for United States senator in California in 1922, and for governor of California in 1926.

Coyote Killed in Ohio. MANCHESTER, O.—(UP)—A coyote, inconspicuous outside its western plains habitat, was killed at Wamsleyville, near here, by G. H. Covert, when he saw the animal chasing his cattle.

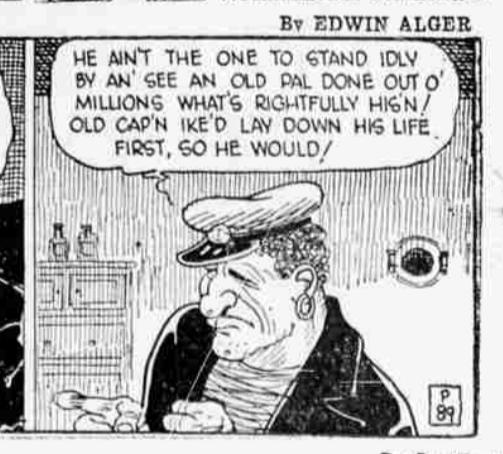
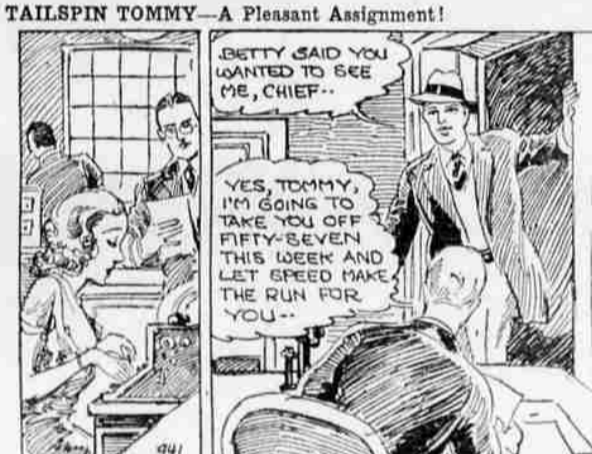
# SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



KNOWING HOW CARELESS MILT GRIGSBY IS ABOUT STOPPING THE MILK, FRED PERLEY WOKED UP EARLY THE MORNING AFTER THE GRIGSBYS LEFT ON THEIR VACATION SO THAT HE COULD STOP THE MILKMAN FROM LEAVING ANY MILK, WHICH SERIOUSLY INCONVENIENCED MILT'S COUSINS, WHO, IT SEEMS, WERE OCCUPYING THE HOUSE WHILE THE FAMILY WAS AWAY (Copyright, 1934, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.) 8-3

# S'MATTER POP—



# COLD WINTER HINTED IN HEAVY NUT CROP

CARBON, Wash.—(UP)—You can look for a very, very cold winter this year!

Indian legend has it an abundance of hazel nuts is a sure sign of a recouros winter. And local residents say never in the history of this county have hazel nuts been so abundant.

# 11th Century Mill to Close

LONDON—(UP)—An 11th century flour mill, dating back to 1086, will close when the venerable mill loses its workers and milling to new works at Victoria Docks. At one time the property of the ancient St. Dunstons, the mill has passed through many an illustrious hand, including that of Henry VIII, who, after he dispersed the monastery, gave it to the ancestors of the Duke of Northumberland.

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