

# Married Flirts

By MABEL McELLIOTT  
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**BEGIN HERE TODAY**  
GYPSY MORELL and TOM WEAVER are married on the same day as LILA BOTTLE and DEBBIE BLISS, but Lila expects to live in luxury while Gypsy keeps her job teaching in a settlement school.

Gypsy has to struggle to keep her job, while Lila becomes another problem in Tom's life. A wealthy MARKO BROUGHTON, a former admirer of Gypsy's, whom they meet at the Bliss' home.

When Gypsy learns she is to have a baby she gives up her job. The baby comes in September and is christened DAVID.

Derek Bliss, weary of the usual whirl in which he and Lila live, begs off from a party one night and Lila goes with Marko. Marko tells her he is mad about her.

On a morning following a lonely evening at home Gypsy finds a woman's handkerchief in Tom's coat pocket.

## HOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

### CHAPTER XXVI

HER heart plunged sickeningly; there was the taste of salt water in her mouth. Her first sensation was of mortal sickness, not anger. The thought that Tom would deliberately deceive her rocked her world. Blindly she went on with her tasks. The day had cleared, was cold, bracing, blue. Gypsy had dressed the baby in his warm suit of woolen, got herself ready for the street.

In the market she stood aside, trying to remember what she had come for. David's luncheon; there must be fresh spinach for it. The thought of food made her definitely ill but she conquered that. As in a dream she bought bread, carrots, potatoes, sugar. Elsa would wonder if she did not buy supplies for dinner. But how did one eat chopped steak when one's heart was breaking?

In the street she saw no one she knew. It was a dismal block she had to traverse, between their apartment building and the wide cobblestoned highway where most of the shops were. An elevated train crashed by. Chaff blew in the gutter. Everyone looked cold, brisk, purposeful. She thought she must be the only woman so miserable in all New York that day. A young, dark-eyed woman in an unfashionable cloth coat, pushing a rosy baby in a big blue carriage. What was she to do now?

Her first impulse was to fly back to the safe shelter of Blue Hills, to cry her heart out in that familiar and beloved setting. But pride held her back. No one should know how she had been hurt. She would work her trouble out alone.

Maybe it all meant nothing, her eager thoughts cried out. Maybe the handkerchief was a trifle Tom had picked up in the street . . . at the office. But she knew it was not true. No, this evidence explained Tom's frequent absences from home lately; his silence, his abstraction. Fool she had been not to see before!

She fed the baby, tucked him away for his nap. Elsa came. "I fix you some lunch, now, huh?" "Just some tea and toast." "You don't feel so good, huh?" Elsa's wide, pink, humorous face took on an expression of concern. "I—I have a headache." It was always easy to say that. You never told anyone you had a pain in your heart.

TOM was late that night, even as he had said, and Gypsy ate a solitary dinner with a book propped up before her, not even seeing the pages but thinking her own thoughts. Elsa washed up, moving stolidly about. Early darkness closed in and lights flashed on all over the city.

"You feel sick, Mrs. Weaver?" "No—I'm all right. Just a little tired."

The apartment was very lonely with Elsa gone and David asleep. There could be years of this sort of thing, Gypsy thought, with a clutch of pain at her heart. Years and years and years of days filled with dull tasks and lonely evenings.

When Tom came in at 9:30, she was playing patience. She had on her old brown velvet coat with its broad lace collar. She was pale but her eyes were feverish and she had painted her small mouth with bright, raspberry colored saliva.

"Lo, dear. Sorry I couldn't get away." She read guilt in every line of him. She lifted a cool cheek for his kiss.

"What's the matter? Anything go wrong?" "No. Everything's fine."

She tried to take her in his arms but she evaded him. "Boy all right!"

She tried to make her voice sound natural, to put all her usual enthusiasm into her tone. "He's splendid." She might tell him how cunning David had been in his bath; how he had laughed aloud, waving his fat starfish hands. She might tell him these things . . . and bore him. So she kept silent.

When Tom said, in a sympathetic tone, "Hotten for you today, kitten. I thought of you so much," her throat ached and tears of self-pity sprang to her eyes. She winked them back, bending with pretended concentration over her cards.

"That red queen . . . what did you say, Tommy?"

He was puzzled—he was frankly puzzled. Gypsy said to herself, "Let him be." She felt herself all tight and sore within, aching, bruised. Where did you get that mono-grammed handkerchief? She might fling that at him, watch him squirm, sh, wriggle out of it. Ah, but she wasn't going to ask—not now, at least.

SHE was miserable in the days that followed. The shadow of black jealousy hovered over all her waking hours. On the surface things were as before. Tom had no more late nights at the office and when he was at home Gypsy was quiet, sweet, interested, apathetic. "I think you ought to see the doctor, honey," he told her more than once. "I think you need a tonic." She shook her head. She wasn't

right, she told him. How explain that what she needed was the elixir of trust, the old, benignant medicine of perfect love and understanding?

In April, one warm, delicious Saturday they drove over to Blue Hills. The baby was adorable in a pink sweater and silky cap. Gypsy had the new gray suit which Tom's commission had made possible. Her mother said gravely, "Seems you've been doing too much, child. You look so thin and big eyed. Tom thinks . . ."

"What does he think?" Gypsy's voice, in spite of herself, was sharp with suspicion.

"Don't be so touchy," soothed Mrs. Morell. "He thought a rest would do you good. A change . . . after the long winter. You could stay here for a week or two. Cytile and I would take David off your hands. He's no trouble anyhow. Such a good baby."

So Tom wanted to get rid of her for a week, did he? Oh, no, she mustn't allow herself to think such thoughts. Her mind was sick, that was all; she was over-tired and foolish. Maybe this brief separation would be the best thing in the world for them both.

When it came time for Tom to leave Sunday evening Gypsy clung to him feverishly. "I think I'd better go back with you, after all," she said faintly. She was desperately afraid she was going to cry.

"Nonsense," Tom said robustly. "You need a change. I'll worry along. I'll telephone you every day."

She watched him go with a dull pain at her heart.

But later, as she picked up the threads of the old life again, she began to wonder what had bothered her back in the city. Color flowed back into her cheeks and hope into her soul. She began to persuade herself that all of her tortures had been self-inflicted. "It's just that I was so much alone and had so much to do," she assured herself. The rich, jumbled, casual family life amused and puzzled her. She worked a little in the garden. She lunched and dined with old friends, answering questions about her husband with that serious young-matronly manner which well became her. At the end of seven days she was missing Tom terribly. Over the telephone each morning he assured her that a solitary state was not one to be desired, no matter what smug bachelors told to the contrary.

"Saw that handsome husband of yours lurching yesterday," she said gaily. It seemed to Gypsy that the glance Sue threw her was a warning one.

"Oh, did you?" asked Gypsy with animation. "Did you stop and speak to him?"

Katherine shrugged this shouldered. "He was much too busy to notice poor little me," she mocked. "He was all wrapped up in the girl with him—stunning looking creature in black. Looked like Paris."

"He—has all sorts of women clients for the various accounts," Gypsy said coldly and proudly. The old, desperate sickness was returning. Yesterday—why, Tom had telephoned her just at 11 o'clock yesterday to work. And she had believed him.

"Of course he has," she said quickly—too quickly. She changed the subject with her usual tact and they spoke of other things. But Gypsy felt the knife turning in her heart. This could not go on! It was a situation beyond her control. When Tom came she would have to have it out with him.

After the girls had gone she glanced over the morning newspaper, seeking an escape from her troubled thoughts. A name stood out from all the others in the column of personal notes on the society page.

"Miss Vera Gray of Boston is at the Weylin."

Something clicked in her brain. Was this what she had been fearing all the time? That girl—how she hated her! Gypsy stood up, her little hands clenched. David sat in his carriage in an angle of the house. Sun poured down on him, a smiling, rosy scrap of babyhood. She stared at him, almost without seeing.

She had been letting things drift. Well, now there must be a showdown! Tom would have to make his choice.

(To Be Continued)

## Flapper Fanny Says

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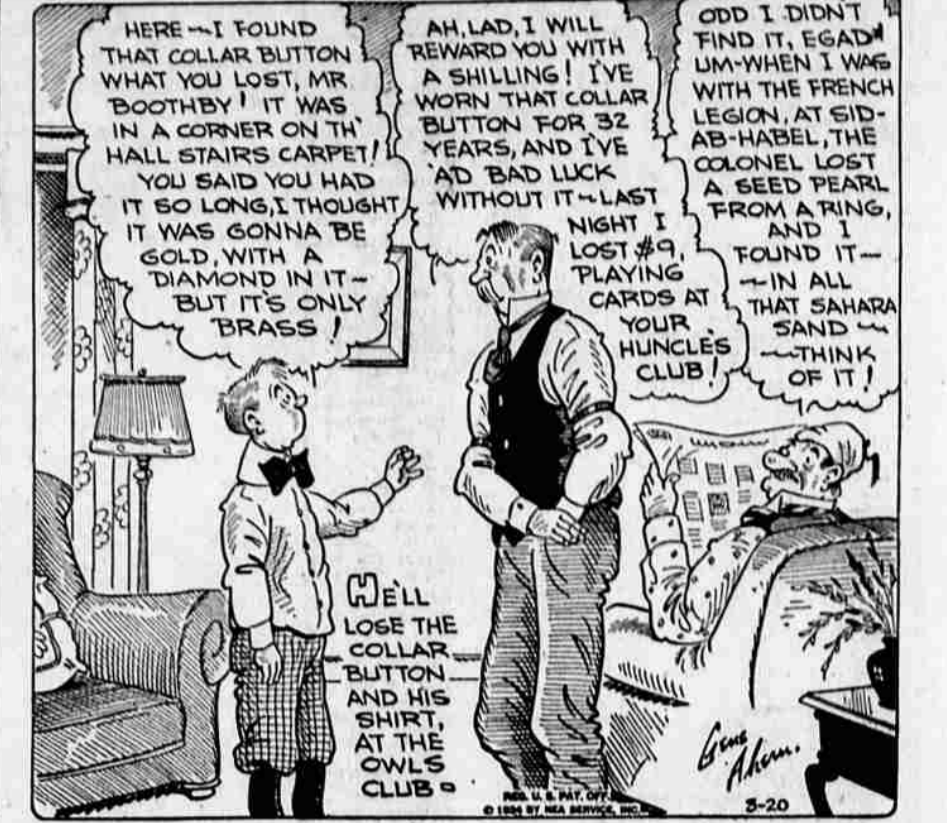
## OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



## OUR BOARDING HOUSE

By Ahern



## SALESMAN SAM

By Small



## BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

By Martin



## WASH TUBBS

By Crane



## FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

By Blosser



## THE NEWFANGLES—MOM'N POP

By Cowan

