

Married Flirts

MABEL M. ELLIOTT
© 1934 NEA Service, Inc.

MEET HERE TODAY
GYPSEY MORSE and TOM WEAVER are married on the same day as LILA HOVALING and BENJAMIN BROWN. LILA's wedding is a society event while Gypsy's is very simple.

While Lila lives in luxury Gypsy has to struggle to keep expenses within Tom's income. She keeps her job teaching until she learns she is to have a baby. After David's birth she is extremely busy, caring for him and for her home.

Tom is frequently away from the evening and Gypsy suspects he is interested in VERA GRAY. One day she sees them going to lunch together. She is heart-broken and refuses to listen to his explanations.

Lila confesses to Gypsy that she intends to divorce her husband and marry MARKO BROUGHTON, richer and older.

Gypsy's father is seriously injured in a motor accident and she and Tom rush to the Merrill home. Meanwhile Lila tells Derek she wants a divorce.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY CHAPTER XXXIV

"MISS GRAY to see you." The automatic announcer on Tom Weaver's desk parroted these words and Tom, frowning, said, "Let her come in."

The girl who presently appeared on the threshold was dazzling in her morning freshness. Her gold and white, rather flashy good looks were admirably set off by a brown tailored suit, faultlessly cut. The guard's hat of gleaming brown straw was worn at a perilous angle. Vera, Tom reflected, had always known how to wear clothes. She was the type that young men still artlessly describe as a "knockout."

"Good morning!" She settled herself in the one comfortable chair in the cubicle and smiled at him brightly.

"I didn't know you were back," Tom said. "Oligaret!"

She accepted one and lit it gracefully. Everything this girl did was studied.

"Got that bird Vasek at last," she said with a satisfied smile.

"Tom did," Tom showed interest.

"You all said I couldn't. Even Mr. Lawrence said I couldn't. But I did!" Her white teeth flashed in triumph.

"Well, he's always been a hard nut. Hard man to see," Tom said reflectively. "Vamped him, eh?"

"I wouldn't say that." Her smile laugh twinkled in modesty.

"Lawrence'll be pleased." Tom swerved in his chair, staring out over the roofs.

"You should have had that account, Tommy!" Her voice took on warmer notes and she laid a hand on his sleeve.

"Oh, rot, it's your business! Glad to see a young girl got along." He grinned at her.

"Wasn't it the funnest thing?" she asked with relish. "My walking in here that day and Mr. Lawrence remembering me back at the Boston office and asking how I'd like to try my hand at the New York work?"

"Certainly was!" Tom's voice sounded enthusiastic enough but there were little lines around his eyes. He looked tired.

"And I was just mad to come down of course. Who wouldn't be?" Vera demanded. "It was the chance of a lifetime."

"Well, you're making good. Who says you're not?" Tom spoke heartily.

"I love it here. . . . Vera stripped off her gloves, raising. "I've got to get some letters off. I suppose you're going downstairs to lunch at about one?"

"Something wrong?" She lifted her eyebrows delicately.

"Gypsy's father," he explained. "Auto accident. He's in a bad way."

"Oh, too bad!" She was reddening her nose now. The tone was perfunctory.

"I'm all cut up about it," Tom stated with finality. "Very fond of Mr. Morell. He's one grand guy. And of course Gypsy's frightfully upset."

"Mmm. . . I can imagine." She stood irresolute in the doorway and he made no move to detain her.

"Well, I'll be seeing you." But after she had gone, leaving a faint, inescapable trace of scent on the air, he put his head in his hands and groaned a little. Gypsy and Vera! Gypsy and Vera! Oil and water, these two natures were as unlike the girl—couldn't help admiring her coquetry. She was a smart business woman and awfully feminine in the bargain. He'd been hoping she'd go back to Boston but she had told Lawrence she didn't want to—so that was that! When she had come into the office a few months ago their old friendship had renewed itself. Hang it all, a man couldn't be a blooming prig! He couldn't say to a girl he'd known so long, "I'm terribly sorry but I'm married now. I can't pass the time of day with you any more."

No, he couldn't do that! And at first he had been afraid to mention to Gypsy the fact that Lawrence (taken with Vera's good looks) had given her a job in the same office. Gypsy would have been suspicious. Women were funny that way. Well, he hadn't mentioned the matter and Vera had helped him to land that silk necking account. He had had to see her out of hours; they had both entertained the space buyers. Why hadn't he told Gypsy then? He couldn't exactly explain. Was it possible he had enjoyed Vera's society as a woman rather than a co-worker? Darn it, she was attractive; she was good fun. Gypsy had been ten times more amusing, more delightful, but that was in the early days, the pre-David days.

It seemed a pity motherhood had to take such a grip on some women. Tom reflected, stuffing his pipe. David was important, of course. He was the son he'd had, an adorable stray of babyhood. But Gypsy had altered

so since his arrival. She didn't want to do things, go places any more. Men weren't used to being tied to a house. They were broken in to the routine of matrimony much less easily than girls.

He thought of Gypsy's white, stricken face as he had left her that morning and almost groaned aloud. His girl, little and slim and adorable; what was she doing now? What particular hell was she going through?

He reached for the telephone. Miles away, across a river, up a line of hills, in a shabby mansarded house a bell tinkled and Clytie's voice came through. "Miss Weaver? He just the same. I'll call Miss Gypsy."

A wait and then Gypsy's faint hello. "We're waiting. The doctors are both here. . . ."

Tom reached for his hat and slammed out of the office. The "man uptown" of whom he had spoken to Vera was more or less fictional. There were several people he had to see but none of the calls were urgent.

Vera was in the outer office as he whirled through, talking to the switchboard girl. At sight of Tom she said, "Don't forget. Tell him I'll be in at three," and tripped after Tom.

"Going up now?" He grinned at her. She was as tall as he. "Far as Seventy-second street."

"I'm going as far as Times Square," she said, lightly. "I'll trail along if you don't mind."

"O. K., lady."

She tucked her bag under one tailored arm and tripped along beside him, her high heels clicking. Tom was conscious of admiring glances as they threaded the noon day crowds. No doubt about it, she was a good-looking girl. Funny she hadn't married.

Of course she was always raving about a career but Tom had noticed that other girls who talked the same way planned to headlong into marriage when the fancy took them. And Vera had lots of beaux. There was always some Johnny on the telephone asking her to dance and dine and what-not.

THEY had to walk two blocks to the hooded subway entrance, jostling people as they went and dodging taxis at the intersections. The ride uptown with the swaying cars and talking themselves forward at breakneck speed through the tunnels, made conversation impossible. Just before the Times Square station was reached the girl touched his arm lightly and said, "Get out here with me, Tommy, and have a chocolate malted. It will only take a sec. I particularly want to ask you something."

It would have seemed churlish to refuse. He could have his soda fountain drink; he could go uptown without feeling guilty. It was a matter of business—Vera was always demanding his advice. Gypsy, far away and in trouble, would neither know nor be hurt.

They climbed on twin stools at a gleaming white and chromium counter. All about them was the paraphernalia of the modern drug store, the books, alarm clocks, costume dolls, rubber goods and nosebags of lollipop which form the background for one lone, lost counter where chemists ply their trade.

"What I want to know," Vera demanded gayly after a white-coated youth had taken their order, "what I want to know is what have I done to make you mad at me? Why don't you like me any more?"

"Me?" Tom stared. "You're crazy, girl. I think you're a whiz."

Her curved smile had a tinge of wistfulness. "That sounds good," she told him, "but you haven't been a bit friendly lately. You've been—well, just horrid."

"What is all this about?" Tom took a sip of ice water and tried to make his humor hearty.

"I must have done something—said something," Vera offered plaintively. "I wish you'd tell me. I'm so fearfully hurt about it. . . ."

"Maybe I'm crazy," Tom said good-naturedly. "I don't know what you're driving at. I'm not mad at you. You haven't done anything to annoy me, and shall we talk about something else?"

Her eyes were dewy. "Sure, Tommy?"

"Absolutely!"

"I'm so terribly glad," she whispered softly. "Because you know what it's always meant to me, having you about, don't you, Tommy?"

The man's heart sank. What was he letting himself in for now? (To Be Continued)

Flapper Fanny Says



Higher-ups are often looked for for the low-down.

OUT OUR WAY



OUR BOARDING HOUSE



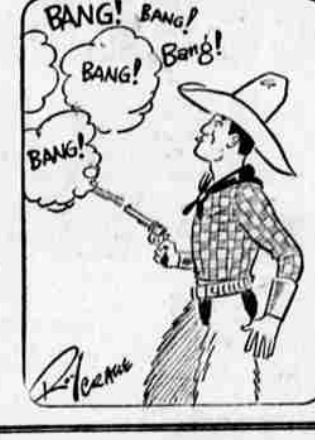
SALESMAN SAM



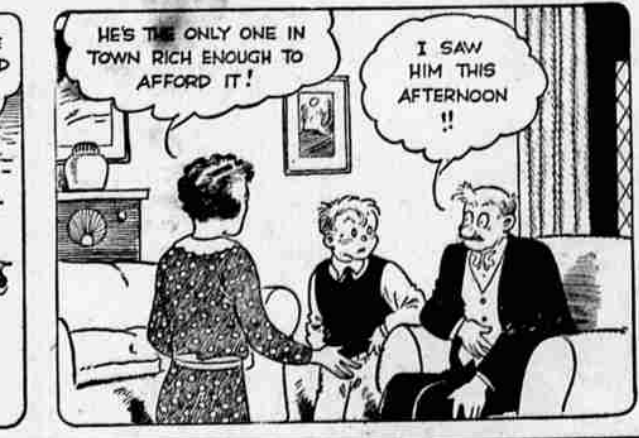
BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



THE NEWFANGLES—MOM'N POP

