

Married Flirts

By MABEL McELLIOTT
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BEGIN HERE TODAY
GYPSY MORELL and TOM WHAVER are married on the same day as HOTA and DIMSK BLISS but Gypsy's wedding is a society event while Hota's is very simple.

While Lisa 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 in the evening and Gypsy suspects he is interested in VERA GRAY, who works in the same office. One day she sees them going into a restaurant. She is heart-broken and refuses to listen to his explanations.

Lisa confesses to Gypsy that she intends to divorce Derek and marry a man named BROUGHTON, who is older.

Gypsy's father is seriously injured in a motor accident. For several days his life hangs in the balance. Then he recovers. Gypsy resolves to forget her jealousy of Vera Gray. However, Vera continues to persecute Tom.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY CHAPTER XXXVI

ELSA came back to work on her old schedule and, with the suddenness of a butterfly released from its net, Gypsy began to rush about whenever she was free. David was in good hands when Elsa was present. He and the clumsy but gentle-fingered maid understood each other and Gypsy could play with an easy mind.

She had known a gay, irresponsible crowd in her pre-marital days. She went back to them now. She went to cocktail parties in Greenwich Village, exhibitions of modern paintings, motion picture showings in the lower circles. She bought some new clothes and had a new, daring haircut.

Tom said he approved of the change, although sometimes you caught a puzzled light in his eyes. This chameleon, this flushed, dark-haired young person in the well-cut gray suit was curiously unlike the discouraged, pallid girl who had complained last winter of the routine of dishes, bottles and naps. Since Gypsy's return she hadn't said a single word about their old difficulties. She had behaved as though nothing had ever happened to disturb her placidity. He didn't quite understand the change but he was grateful for it.

Meanwhile, he was interested in and attracted by the transformation. Of course Gypsy was his girl—his wife—no matter how she looked nor what she did to herself. But, although he approved her gaiety and spirit in theory, sometimes he missed the old Gypsy with her serious talk of budgets and cheap cuts and her adorable frown over the laundry list. This girl was far too busy to bother with laundry lists. There were buttons missing from Tom's things nowadays and his brown and blue socks had holes in the toes. Other things came home in the evening to find her still away and Elsa muttering over the pots and pans, anxious to put on her big shapeless hat and remove herself to that mysterious realm from which she would emerge the next working day.

Tom would be left to give David his bath. Presently Gypsy would flash in with a gardenia at her throat and the scent of cigarettes clinging to her cool, fresh cheek.

"Sorry, darling. I had no idea it was so late. Ronny Burgess had a Russian violinist and it was so thrilling!"

She would tie a big apron over her sheer black frock with its frilly collar. Smiling still over the afternoon, she would serve Tom cold ham and potato chips and salad. She seldom bothered to cook much now. For one thing, the weather was growing warmer. For another, she hadn't the time and Elsa was a most indifferent chef. Besides Tom didn't care. He used to be bored, she thought now, with all those fancy messes she had prepared for him. That was little bride stuff! Well, she had got bravely over that phase.

It was thrilling—it was exhilarating to be received back into the old circle as an equal. At first people had openly patronized her. "How's the baby?" they had asked negligently. "How's motherhood?" But they had got past that now. She was one of them. She had even joined a class in sculpture, one that met Tuesday afternoons, and it was, she said, "inspiring."

It was queer but the prospect of spending the summer in the apartment didn't daunt her now. Last year she had been unable to bear the very notion. But that had been because of her condition. She felt strong now and it was fun to be within reach of things. Why, if she moved to the suburbs she would miss out on all the invitations she now accepted so eagerly. No one would remember her if she buried herself in some little house on a side road.

When Tom said something about trying to find a place on the Island she smiled and shook her head. "Don't bother, darling. We'll be all right. I don't mind the city any more. Besides, everyone says we're going to have a cool summer."

The puzzled look came into his eyes again and he said no more. More often than not Gypsy encountered Hunt Gibson at these festivities. Hunt was very much the young-man-about-town at the moment and he had met these people through Sue Canavan. The more Gypsy saw of him the better she liked him. He was always so amusing. He had a grand sense of humor. You saw him on the avenue these days, broad shoulders set off to advantage by his well fitting British clothes. He swung a stick. Girls riding on the tops of buses craned their necks to see him. "Oh," they said, "isn't he like Gary Cooper?"

He would offer Gypsy a lift up-town as they left the Eighth street metro—Ronny's or Elsie Harris' place on Barrow street. "Coming my way?" he would say, smiling.

Gypsy would waver. "I was going to stop at the French pastry

shop on Sixth and get some brioches for breakfast."

"Well, come along. The taxi can wait, can't it?"

It was fun; it was all fun. To play at being a girl again, to pretend for a little while there were no responsibilities, no worries. Of course you always went home to the baby and Tom with a thankful feeling. It was wonderful, back of all this playing and laughing and chatting, to feel that your life was secure, settled. Just the same, the dash of freedom made Gypsy rounder, rosier, prettier than she had been in years.

She looked about her at the people she knew, the completely unfettered ones, and found that she did not envy them. Elsiepeth was thin, haggard, nervous, at 29; in love with a married man from Park avenue. Ronny had been married and divorced and so had Willa Burns and one or two of the other girls. None of them had children. She would rush into the apartment after an afternoon punctuated by frenzied chatter, scented with cigar smoke and the dregs of a cocktail shaker. She would bury her face in the pink warmth and sweetness of David's baby neck.

"Was he good, Elsa?"
"Oh, sure, he fine." Elsa would wriggle out of her apron.
"Take his carols all right?"
"Ya, he eat um all up."

"Well, now I've got to settle down to business." She would hum a dance tune, looking abstractedly into the looker. Asparagus and cold lamb and a salad; Tom would like that. She wasn't hungry. Those pat sandwiches had been so good . . .

The door would slam. Tom would be in the doorway. "Hello, darling!"

She would smile at him in the old welcoming way and he would fold her in his long arms.
"Been painting the town again?"
"Ye. Oh, I must tell you, Ronny was the most marvelous idea . . ."

She would talk eagerly all through dinner and would not notice particularly if he were unresponsive. "Don't you think so?"
"Umm . . ." Tom would stare at her, that puzzled small-boy expression on his face again. "Fraid I didn't hear what you said, darling."

But all this did not dash her spirits as once it would have done. She would pat his shoulder gently. Poor Tommy, he was all tired out these nights from that hard old job!

ONE night he slapped the newspaper down beside her. It was folded neatly back to a pencilled item.

"What on earth!" Gypsy picked it up, stared at it. She paled a trifle. Almost it was like a bad omen. "Lisa's got her divorce!"

"Yep." Tom rubbed his forehead reflectively. "I wonder it lasted that long. He was a good guy, too." "Oh, marvelous," Gypsy assented absently.

"What happened?"
"I don't . . ." she flushed over the words. "I don't know."
"Well, I think it's a rotten deal for Lisa anyway." Tom offered bluntly. "He deserved a better break."

"We were married the same day," Gypsy reflected. "Oh, Tommy, wouldn't it be dreadful if anything like that happened to us?"
"It would!" His voice sounded grim.

She shivered and his arm tightened around her.
"Don't be silly."
She blinked and laughed, wiping suddenly filmed eyes. "I don't know—something goes wrong and first thing you know people talk divorce."

"Who does?"
"Well," she told him slowly, "I've been so mad at you, once or twice, I've been on the verge of suggesting it myself."
"Rot!"
"No, but seriously," Gypsy said, luxuriating in her own sense of security. "What could a man or woman do if the other person in the case came to him and said 'Look, I want to be free!'"

Tom shrugged. "I don't know. Let him go, I guess."
She protested, "Ah, but that's not right. I suppose I'd do it, though. I suppose anyone would. Pride would make you, no matter how you felt."

"Let's stop talking nonsense," Tom advised with a yawn.
Gypsy thought of the conversation later that night. Such things did happen, and to people they knew, too. So far she and Tom had been lucky to keep their marriage safe. Pray God their luck would hold!

(To Be Continued)

Flapper Fanny Says



When it comes to trying on a new dress, most girls are in a glass by themselves.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



THE LOST DAY.

THE LOST DAY.

THE LOST DAY.

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

By Ahern



THEN HE WENT VERY DIZZY.

THEN HE WENT VERY DIZZY.

SALESMAN SAM

By Small



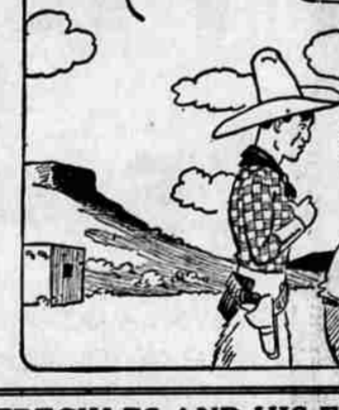
BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

By Martin



WASH TUBBS

By Crane



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

By Blosser



THE NEWFANGLES—MOM'N POP

By Cowan

