

GLORIA

THE FLAPPER WIFE

Gloria Decides to Leave Dick After a Quarrel Over His Mother.

THE STORY SO FAR: GLORIA GORDON, beautiful flapper, married DICK GREGORY, struggling lawyer. Her idea of marriage is fun and fine clothes . . . but no work or children. She refuses to cook or keep house, and hires RAEGAN SWANSON to do it for her, although Dick says they can't afford it. She swamps Dick with debts for her clothes and a new automobile. Gloria becomes infatuated with STANLEY WAYBURN, an out-of-work actor. Her lazy friend, MAY SEYMOUR, begs Gloria not to be seen with Wayburn. Mar herself is snubbed everywhere because of her foolish love affair with Jim Caraway. Dick is seriously ill with pneumonia. During the slow days of his recovery, Gloria sees Wayburn constantly. He tells her he is leaving soon for New York. He needs money. Gloria borrows \$500 of Dick's money from his secretary, MISS BRIGGS. She tells Miss Briggs she wants to spend the money fixing up the yard and house for Dick. Wayburn and Gloria go riding in her car and it overturns in a ditch. Gloria, badly hurt, is rushed to the hospital. Wayburn disappears. DICK SEYMOUR orders Dick away for a rest. His mother who has been ill, plans to go with him. Gloria tells Dick that if MOTHER GREGORY goes she won't. Shortly after her return from the hospital Gloria has a letter from Wayburn. Dick asks to see it.

By Beatrice Burton

CHAPTER XLII
GLORIA could feel Wayburn's letter inside her blouse, where she had slipped it. It crackled against her flesh with every breath she drew.

"There really was nothing inside the letter that she couldn't show, Dick, she was sure."

It was as harmless a letter as ever had been written.

There was not a single word in it to suggest that it had been penned by a lover to the lady of his dreams.

Gloria pulled it from the top of her dress and handed it to Dick.

"Here, read it yourself," she said. "It's from Stan Wayburn."

But Dick didn't read it. He didn't open it. He hardly touched it. . . . Just long enough to toss it down on the oak-wood table at the end of the davenport.

His face was white under the light of the tall lamp that stood there.

"So?" he questioned. "My wife carries Wayburn's letter against her heart?"

Gloria laughed.

"Dick, you're absurd," she said. "I never thought of its being against my heart. I stuck it into my blouse so Ranghild wouldn't find it and read it."

"I see," Dick said. But his face was grim. He sat down in his armchair and filled his pipe. He picked up the book he was reading. Then he laid it down upon his knees.

"Gloria," he said abruptly, "tell me the truth for once in your life. . . . Are you or are you not in love with Wayburn?"

"I don't know," Gloria answered. She had asked herself that question a thousand times. And she never answered it the same way twice.

"That's nonsense," Dick went on impatiently. "You must know how you feel about him. . . . Tell me this: 'you don't care about me any more, do you?'"

GLORIA looked across the room at him with the calm eyes of the Sphinx, herself. But his question had set thoughts to buzzing like bees in her head.

How much did she care about Dick?

Would she miss him if he went away from her as she missed Stanley Wayburn?

She wondered.

She felt Dick as something trustworthy, honest and good beyond measure. Good all the way through. . . . That was Dick.

But did she love him?

"I don't know, Dick," Gloria said at last.

She sat up straight, pulling herself together like a woman who had something to say and meant to say it now.

"I'll try to tell you how I feel about you, if I can, Dick," she said. "To begin with, I hate housework. I hate having to run this house for you. It makes me sick and tired. And sometimes I almost hate you for marrying me and turning me into a housewife!"

Dick gave a short laugh.

"Bah!" he said. "You a housewife! That's pretty good, Gloria. You haven't done a day's housework."



"I'm going away. When Mr. Gregory comes back show him this letter."

in your whole life! How do you know whether you hate it or not?"

Gloria waved his words aside.

"Now don't interrupt me!" she snapped at him. "When I married you, I was awfully tired of office work. I was tired of playing around with fellows who didn't want to get married. . . . And you looked awfully good to me, see?"

Dick nodded.

"I see perfectly," he said. "You wanted to marry Wayburn, but he didn't want to marry you. I came along, and you thought I had a lot of money. So you married me. Isn't that it?"

Gloria shook her head so that every curl on it quivered.

"No, no. That wasn't it," she said quickly. "I'm not such a gold digger as all that! But I knew you'd be awfully good to me if I married you. And . . . you know I did care for you, Dick, don't you?"

Dick puffed his pipe in silence. He passed his hand across his forehead, cold and wet with sweat.

"Was Wayburn ever in love with you?" he asked.

"I thought he was once," Gloria answered, "but I found out that he wasn't."

She got up and came across the room to Dick. She sat down on the arm of his chair and put her face down against his hair.

"I know," she said. "I know that Stan's whole body isn't worth your little finger. He's not good like you are. . . . But I do miss him! He's a lot of fun. I love to dance and jazz around with him. He's my kind. . . ."

Dick held himself together hard. "All right, all right," he said. "I've heard all I can stand to hear about Wayburn. But he's gone now, thank God! You and I can make a fresh start, can't we?"

"I hope so," Gloria answered uncertainly.

Dick pulled her down onto his knees and held her away from him by both arms. His eyes searched her face.

"Gloria," he said, "while I'm away these next two or three weeks, I want you to think things over. We've been married six months and we've done nothing but bicker and quarrel. . . . I can't live like that. This Wayburn business has been the last straw. It's just about finished me!"

Gloria looked at him in surprise. She didn't mind a good quarrel. She rather liked it.

In fact, she enjoyed a scene! It was exciting, if nothing more. She was excited now.

"I don't want you to live with me unless you love me," Dick went on. "I couldn't stand that. So you think it over and make up your mind what you want to do while I'm gone. Will you?"

Gloria widened her eyes in astonishment.

"Do you mean to say you're going away?"

Puzzle a Day

Old books are collected in every country by discriminating collectors. In the rare book department of the Congressional Library is a volume made of old parchment instead of paper. Its leaves are carefully and beautifully hand-printed. On the title page is the date of its printing, 42 B. C. This book was given to the library when the nineteenth century had completed its twenty-fifth year. . . . How old was the book when it was donated?

Last puzzle answer:

← 5 YARDS

Each girl should walk 145 yards. Starting at "A" and walking the dotted line to the basket is five yards; basket to "A-B" is ten yards and back makes twenty yards; basket to "A-B-C" is fifteen yards and back makes thirty yards; basket to "A-B-C-D" is twenty yards, and back makes forty yards; basket to "A-B-C-D-E" is twenty-five yards, and back is fifty yards. Therefore, 5 plus 20 plus 30 plus 40 plus 50 equals 145 yards.

away and leave me at home alone, Dick Gregory?" she cried. She got up from his knees.

"I thought you said you didn't want to go?" Dick answered.

"I said I wouldn't go if your mother went with us," Gloria explained. "And you've just got to tell her she can't go with us!" She stamped her foot.

"I'm sorry, but she's made all her plans to go. She doesn't think for a minute that we don't want her," Dick said anxiously. "How in the deuce can I tell her that we don't want her to go, sick as she is? It would break her heart."

Gloria smiled maliciously.

"All right, dearie," she said smoothly. "You go with your mother and leave me here alone, if you want to. . . . You do it, and believe me, you'll be sorry for it to your dying day!"

Dick groaned in despair.

"Oh, have a heart, Gloria," he said. "How can you be so cruel to a woman as old and sick as my mother?"

"I suppose I'm not sick, myself!" Gloria cried. "I suppose I haven't been in the hospital myself for weeks! . . . She doesn't need this rest a bit more than I do. Not a bit!"

Dick made no answer.

"If she goes, I don't!" Gloria blazed at him. "I wouldn't go anywhere with her on a bet! Everything I did or said, all the time we were gone, she'd razz me for. . . . Oh, I know her! . . . And you'll just have to choose between us, Mr. Man!"

Dick sat silent for a few minutes, puffing at his little briar pipe. Then he got up, put on his hat, and went out doors. He always went for a long walk, by himself, when he was upset or troubled about anything.

GLORIA stood still in the middle of the room where he had left her. A smile across her face . . . the slow, sly smile of Mona Lisa.

"Dick'd never leave me home for two or three weeks," she said to herself. "He's crazy about me!"

She went upstairs and began to sort out the clothes she would need

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for the trip. She was sure she was going. . . .

There was a surprise in store for her.

On Saturday morning, Dick and Mother Gregory went away on an early morning train!

Up to the last moment Dick had begged Gloria to go along. And up to the last moment Gloria had refused to go.

"Not with your mother!" she had said over and over. She was sure that, in the end, Dick would take her instead of his mother.

Even now, as she stood at her bedroom window, watching his cab turn the corner of the street, she couldn't believe that he had gone and left her behind.

Thunderstruck, she pounded the frame of the window with her clenched hands, in a fit of rage.

"Oh, I hate him! I hate him!" she cried. "He'll be sorry for this!"

A knock came at the door. Ranghild stood there.

"Did you call me, ma'am?" she asked. "I thought I heard your voice."

"No. . . . Yes!" Gloria said. "Telephone the station, please, to see what time the next train for New York leaves."

She bathed and dressed in a fever of speed. She packed a suitcase. Before she had finished Ranghild came upstairs with the coffee tray.

Standing by the dresser, Gloria gulped down two cups of the hot, satisfying drink, and nibbled a piece of toast.

"My last meal in this house!" she told herself, angrily.

She took her purse from the top drawer of her dressing table. There was \$95 in it that Dick had given her to pay the food bills for the month.

Gloria ran down to get it. She sat at the desk and wrote a note to Dick.

"Goodbye," she scribbled. "I told you, you'd have to choose between your mother and me. And I guess you've chosen. So I'm off in a flutter of dust. I was the wrong wife for you, anyway. You should have married some nice, homely woman like Miss Briggs."

Gloria did not sign the cruel little note. She put it into an envelope and laid it on the table under Dick's ash tray where he would be sure to see it when he came home.

"Ranghild," she called as she heard the girl in the hall outside. "I'm going away. When Mr. Gregory comes back show him this letter I'm leaving here for him."

"Oh, ma'am!" said Ranghild, clasping her hands together. She was sure that something was wrong. "I hope you come back soon!"

Gloria pretended not to see the distress in her eyes. She picked up her bag, and hurried past her.

"Good-bye to Sing-Sing prison!" she said, looking back at it, as she went down the street.

(To Be Continued.)

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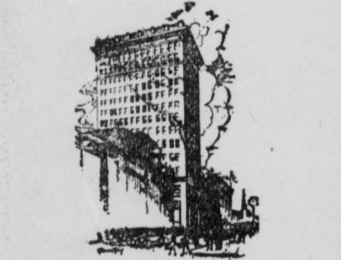
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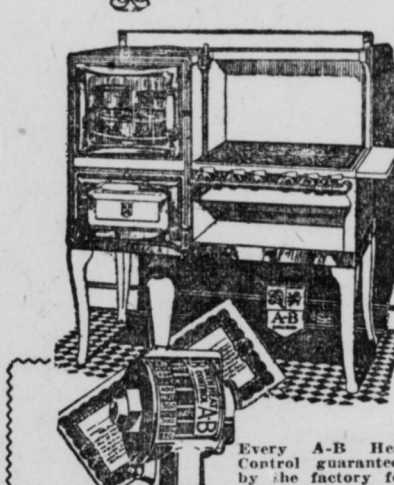
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