

GLORIA

THE FLAPPER WIFE

Gloria, Unable to Find a Place on the Stage, Returns Home.

THE STORY SO FAR
Gloria Gordon, beautiful, flapper, married Dick, a young lawyer. Her idea of marriage is fun and fine clothes. . . but no work or children! She refuses to cook or keep house, and hires Raoul's swain to do it for her, although Dick says she can't afford a maid. And she swamps Dick with debts for her clothes and a new automobile.

Gloria becomes infatuated with an out-of-work actor, Stanley Wayburn. She sees him constantly. Finally Wayburn is offered a job in New York as leading man for a Russian actress, Sonya Chotek. He needs money, which she gets from her secretary, Miss Briggs. She tells Miss Briggs she needs the money for the house.

Dick is ill with pneumonia and almost dies. When he recovers, Dr. John Seymour sends him away for a long rest. Gloria refuses to go along, because Dick's mother, whom she hates, is coming.

As soon as they leave town, Gloria sets out for New York. She goes straight to Wayburn. But he surprises her, telling her that he has just married Sonya Chotek. Then Gloria goes to Kit Cameron, a friend of hers, who is a chorus girl to ask her to help her out. But Kit's manager refuses to give Gloria a place in the chorus.

By Beatrice Burton
CHAPTER XLIV
FOR a week Gloria dragged herself up and down Broadway hunting for a job.

She went from one manager to another just as fast as she could go. She started out with Bob Lingard, whose show, "Fille," was breaking all records on Broadway. And she ended with the manager of a cheap burlesque show on Fourteenth St.

It was the manager of the burlesque show who told her what was wrong with her.

"Now, listen, kid," he said to her, shoving his brown derby hat back on his head. "You're pretty but you ain't got nothin'. Some's tall and lean, some's short and fat—but they gotta have somethin'. You can't be just a cake o' ice, and get away with it in the show business!"

Gloria went away puzzled. What did the man mean. . . that she was a cake of ice? Perhaps he meant that she wasn't a type, like Kit Cameron. . . that she looked like any other pretty girl.

So she tried to look "different." She brushed all the wave out of her hair, and plucked her eyebrows until they were only a thin black line.

But no one had a job for her. Her money was all gone. She sold her rings and her wrist-watch.

Every morning she would start out, with a prayer in her heart. And every night she would drag herself back to her hotel room. . . tired and dirty and discouraged, sick at heart.

They said that Broadway was paved with broken hearts. Well, Gloria was one of them. Gloria told herself bitterly as the days went by.

Why couldn't she land a job like that other pretty girl?

Wasn't she really as pretty as Dick had always said she was? Was he the only man in the world who could see her beauty?

To all these theatrical men was she just one more stage-struck girl? . . . It began to look that way to Gloria.

She wondered if she dared go back to Dick, who loved her. . . Oh, what a fool she had been ever to leave him!

Who would he take her back? Oh! Would he?

SHE sat one night at her window looking down into the moth-brown twilight of West Eleventh St. She rubbed her face and neck with cold cream, to remove the grime of New York from her soft white skin. She polished her nails.

Tears filled her eyes and ran down her cheeks, making little furrows in the cold cream on them. The sobs that she had been choking back for days, burst from her, suddenly.

"Oh, what am I going to do? What am I going to do?" she wailed over and over. Despair covered her like a cloak of darkness.

It was at that moment that the telephone rang.

Gloria sat up and looked at it, curiously.

Who could be calling her?—Stan Wayburn? Kit Cameron?—Probably only the hotel manager, to ask her why she didn't pay her bill! It was overdue. . .

"Hello," she said wearily.

A man's deep voice answered her. "Bob Lingard speaking," he said briefly.

tell you about the new show I'm putting on next season, Miss Gordon. He tucked her hand under his own on the driving wheel, as the gray car slid into motion.

Gloria's head whirled. A new show! Was Lingard going to give her a job in it? . . . It sounded that way.

She leaned back and drew a sigh of happiness. The night wind lifted the little curls that edged her forehead. She closed her eyes. . . She did not see the queer, side-wise look that Lingard turned on her as she lay back against the soft leather cushion.

"Ah, this was something like it," she thought.

To be rolling along in this purring car with a man who could give her a career!

She felt she was stepping into a new world. She sighed with the sudden joy of living. . . This was the sunrise after the darkness of the last two weeks!

GLORIA had never been in a private dining room before in all her life.

"Queer little room," she murmured.

She felt unreal. . . as if she were part of a dream. As if the bright little room with its mirrors and its red carpet was the background of a dream.

But the food, when it came, was real enough. Gloria ate greedily. She was half-starved after her week of coffee and sandwiches.

The dinner came to an end at last. Lingard leaned back in his chair and stirred the highball the waiter had mixed for him. He was silent.

Gloria felt uneasy under his steady gaze.

She had never looked longer at her life than she did that night.

Her face was thinner. . . worn down to the last expression of its girlish comeliness by the misery of the last two weeks. And against the pearl of her skin, her mouth was like a red nasturtium.

Lingard leaned forward and took her hands, where they lay on the tablecloth, in his. He stroked the silky palms.

"You look like an old sweetheart of mine back in the little Ohio town, where I grew up," Gloria Gordon, he said suddenly. "Ever since you came into my office the other day, I've been thinking about you. Your face has stuck in my mind for the last four or five days. . . and I see a lot of girls in four or five days."

There was a long pause. Then Lingard went on.

"This new show of mine is called 'Morning Glory,'" he said. "I want you to be in it."

"Hello," she said wearily.

A man's deep voice answered her. "Bob Lingard speaking," he said briefly.

Bob Lingard! The producer of "Fille" . . . Gloria's heart gave a wild leap.

She had left her telephone number with Lingard a week ago. But she had never expected to hear from him again. And now—this!

He wanted her to go out to dinner with him, to talk business, he said. "To talk business! That means a job!" Gloria laughed to herself, as she left the telephone. She danced around the room for very lightness of heart.

She smiled joyously into her mirror as she dressed.

"Listen and don't say much. . . that's the way to make a hit with 'em," she knew. And she'd make a hit with Lingard that night if he never opened her mouth!

Gloria rubbed the tiniest bit of rouge on her cheeks, and dusted her nose with powder. She didn't want to look "made-up."

She had learned that the more fresh and natural a girl was, the more chance she had on Broadway. There were too many painted beauties there. They all looked alike. . .

She was blooming like a half-opened rose when she met Lingard in the lobby of her little hotel at 8 o'clock. She looked up at him shyly, and smiled her greeting.

Bob Lingard was a tall, heavy-set man with a bulldog jaw. His brown eyes bulged a little. In her secret soul, Gloria thought him repulsive.

But she did not flinch when he drew her arm through his. They stepped out into the warm May night. . .

to get together a brand-new chorus for it. . . none of the girls that Broadway has seen before. I want new faces, faces fresh as morning glories, for it. . .

HE stopped and lighted a thick cigar.

"I think that, with three months' training, I could make you



There in his arm-chair sat Dick! "I knew it was you," he said.

of a pretty nifty chorus girl. But you'd have to work, and work hard!" he said. "How about it?"

Gloria was scarcely breathing. She trembled with excitement.

"I've made many an actress out of a nobody in my time," Lingard went on. "A good show and plenty of advertising will make any girl a star, over-night. All she needs is the looks. . . and you've got 'em, believe me! I could always fall for a redhead, kid!"

His voice grew suddenly thick. He got up from his chair. With the eyes of a dove that watches the approach of a serpent, Gloria watched Lingard come around the table toward her.

He put one of his big hands under her chin, tilting her face up toward him. Gloria struggled hard not to be afraid. After all, what could happen to her?

"I'm going to put you across as the liveliest chorus-girl in America," Lingard said. "How about it?"

It took all of Gloria's courage to smile up at him. But she did—ravishingly.

Lingard pulled her suddenly to her feet. He crushed her in his big arms. His mouth passed over her face, covering it with kisses.

Gloria tore herself away from him. "Please don't, Mr. Lingard," she cried out. "You've no right to do that. . ."

She rubbed her lips with her handkerchief.

Lingard laughed. He moved toward her. "Too good to live, aren't you, honey?" he asked cheerfully. "That's what they all say! . . . What do you think the world's made of? What do you think I'm giving you a job in my best show for? For the joy of doing good in the world? You make me laugh!"

He seized her in his arms again, almost lifting her from her feet.

They struggled together, bumping against the table. Gloria made a wild sweep with her hand, and

picked up Lingard's highball glass. She leaned back and dashed it in his face.

Instantly he let her go, his face dripping.

"You little fiend," he roared. "What are you trying to do?"

He took out his handkerchief and wiped his face. His cheek was bleeding where the breaking glass had cut it.

He was out of breath, and furiously angry. But his eyes were puzzled. "Get the lady a taxi," he said.

As Gloria followed the waiter out to the street, she knew that her last chance to star on Broadway was gone, forever! She was utterly beaten. . . But suddenly she didn't care. She wanted nothing but home. . . and Dick. They seemed a million

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miles away! Her own room! The sights she knew! Home!

THE Gloria who unlocked the door of her own house a few days later was not the defiant young creature who had left it three weeks before.

The old Gloria would have come swinging up the steps, singing a bit of rag-time. This one crept into the house wearily. The grandfather's clock in the hall struck the hour as she came in.

Gloria looked up at it. She had learned a thing or two since she had last heard the striking of that clock! She looked around the corner of the door into the living room. There in his arm-chair sat Dick!

"I knew it was you," he said.

(To Be Continued)

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25c Laxa-Pirin. **19c**

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