

# GLORIA THE FLAPPER WIFE

Gloria Discovers Dick and Miss Briggs Having Dinner Together.

## THE STORY SO FAR

Gloria Gordon, beautiful flapper, married Dick Gregory, a struggling lawyer. Her idea of marriage is fun and fine clothes, but no work or children. She refuses to cook and keep house. She hires Raoul Swanson to do it for her. Although Dick says they can't afford a maid, and she swamps him with bills for her clothes and an automobile. Gloria becomes infatuated with Stanley Wayburn, an actor. She and Wayburn, with May Seymour and Jim Carver, make a jolly foursome. Wayburn is offered a job in New York, as leading man for a Russian actress, Sonya Chotek. He needs money. Gloria lends him \$200 of Dick's money, which she coaxes from his secretary, Miss Briggs. Dick is ill with pneumonia. When he recovers, Dr. John Seymour, husband of the night May sends him away for a rest. Gloria returns to go along because Dick's mother, whom she hates, is going. As soon as they leave on their trip, Gloria sets out for New York. She goes straight to Wayburn. But he spurns her and tells her he has just married Sonya Chotek. For two weeks, Gloria tries to land a job, but fails. Finally, she comes home to Dick. He takes her back but tells her she will have to prove to him that she intends to be a better wife. If she wants to stay, he feels sure that she only resents she came back to him was because Wayburn had married.

By Beatrice Burton

## CHAPTER XLVI

THE next morning Gloria was awakened by a loud knocking on the door of her room. "Ye-es," she called in a thick, sleepy voice. She had been dreaming that she was still in the lonely hotel room in New York.

Then she heard Dick's voice: "Better get up, Gloria," he was saying. "There's no Randig to bring your breakfast this morning, you know."

Gloria didn't answer at once. The door was not locked. Why didn't Dick come in to say "Hello" to her?

Oh, all right, she made up her mind suddenly, if he wanted to keep her at arm's length, she'd help him out!

"Thanks, I'll get up when I feel like it," she said. But the old snarl and spirit had gone out of her voice. There was silence for a few seconds, then the soft pad-pad of Dick's feet going down the stairs. Before he had reached the bottom Gloria was out of bed on her bare feet.

Dick looked up in surprise as she ran down into the hall.

"I think you might have been a sport and made some coffee for me," she said to him.

"Do you?" Dick asked, politely. There was no color in his voice. He picked up his brief case from the table in the living room.

"Yes, I do," Gloria cried. "I think it's mean of you to treat me like a red-headed stepchild when I've come back and told you I'm sorry. Do you know you haven't spoken a kind word to me since the night I showed you Stan Wayburn's letter?... I suppose you never had a letter from a woman in your life! I suppose you never did anything you're ashamed of! You're so darned pure!"

Woman-like she seized upon the half-forgotten letter incident as a peg to hang all her discontent upon, now.

Dick didn't answer. He crossed the room to his old writing desk.... the only bit of furniture that he had brought with him from his old home.

HE took from it a bundle of letters and photographs, and tossed them down on the table without a word. There was a queer cold smile on his face.... as he went out.

The front door banged. In the stillness that settled down over the house, Gloria could almost hear her heart beating.

Did Dick mean that she was to look at the letters? Was there an answer to her question in them? Was that what the smile on Dick's face had meant?

She picked them up, and loosed the rubber bands that held them together.

The letter that lay on the top of the pile was the one she read first. It was written in blue ink on dull blue paper, and it smelled faintly of violets.

"Dick, dearest," it said, "I am sick of tearing up the letters that I write to you. I am tired of pretending—and so I am going to tell the truth to you. I love you, Dick. I love you. It is hard for me to write this letter.... Lucie."

"Lucie" had not found it so hard to write the half dozen letters that followed, it seemed. Some of them were ten pages long. And all of them were signed with "Love and kisses from Lucie." That seemed to be her stock phrase.

Under "Lucie's" love notes was another package of letters. These were all from a woman who signed herself "Roxie." Roxie's letters were passionate, to say the least.

"She must have been reading Ellen Glyn," said Gloria to herself, with amusement. To think of good old Dick having a love affair with a woman like Roxie!... Gloria giggled inwardly.

But her laughter died when she came to the photographs that had been tied up with the letters.

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Don't stay headachy, dizzy, bilious, constipated, sick! One or two pleasant candy-like "Cascarets" taken any time will mildly stimulate your liver and start your bowels. Then you will both look and feel clean, sweet and refreshed. Your head will be clear, stomach sweet, tongue pink and your skin rosy.

Because "Cascarets" never gripe or sicken, it has become the largest selling laxative in the world. Directions for men, women, children on each box—any drugstore.

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It was not until then that she saw that Dick was not alone.

ONE was a picture of a lovely blonde with bobbed hair. Bobbed hair! Then Dick must have known her within the last few years, since bobbed heads had become the fashion!

The other picture was an enlarged snapshot of Dick and a tall, sweet-faced brunet. Both of them were in white sports clothes and carried tennis rackets. Dick had his arm across the shoulders of the girl. At the bottom was written, "Gilchrist's house party, June, 1923."

Only two years ago! "Well!" Gloria said to herself, a little out of breath, "what do you know about that?"

She wondered if the girl in the snapshot were "Roxie" or "Lucie." She read the letters again—as if, perhaps, they might yield up their secret the second time. But she was just as puzzled as before.

She pondered all morning as she went around the house with a silly feather duster that only stirred up the dust in the rooms instead of clearing it away.

A dozen times she came back to the living room table to look at those two pictures. She wasn't worried about the "Roxie" letters.... but the girl who had written the "Lucie" letters had evidently cared deeply for Dick.

Had he cared for her, Gloria wondered? She couldn't think of Dick caring for any woman save herself. She couldn't bear the thought of his holding another woman in his arms and telling her that he loved her.

And yet, of course, he had! He must have! Not only one but two women. Otherwise they would never have written him all these love letters.... They wouldn't have dared.

HE took the letters with her out into the kitchen, and read them again while she ate the cold canned salmon that was all the lunch she had. She propped the two photographs up against the mirror of her dressing-table while she dressed late in the afternoon.

She had never thought of any other women being in Dick's life, before she met him. And yet there must have been, of course.... But he had been so madly in love with her from that first night when he had kissed her that she had never dreamed of any other women.... the thought had never worried her at all. It had not even ruffled her vanity.

While she sat there brushing her hair, the telephone rang. "Hello, Gloria," it was Dick's voice. "Are we going to have dinner at home tonight?"

Gloria gasped. "Who's going to cook it?"

"Why don't you make a stab at it?" Dick asked. "No time like the present, you know." Gloria objected. "I couldn't. And besides there's not a thing in the house."

"All right, suit yourself," Dick's voice was remotely polite. "I'll eat downtown then, if you don't mind. Goodbye."

But Gloria did mind. She minded very much.... There was nothing

she enjoyed more than having a meal downtown. And Dick knew it! Gloria stamped her foot. What did Dick think she was, anyway? Some kind of a doorman that he could trample on?

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Well, she'd show him where to head in!... She would get dressed this very minute, and march straight downtown to his office! She would go out to supper with him or know the reason why....

"Mama goes where papa goes. Or papa don't go out tonight," sang Gloria at the top of her voice, as she turned on the faucets in the bathtub. Then she remembered that the song was Stanley Wayburn's favorite ballad. She stopped singing.

She wanted never to think of Stan Wayburn again, so long as she lived! For the last six months Gloria had thought that she was in love with Stan. There had been something in him that called to her.... his devil-may-care quality, his everlasting cheerfulness.

But when she found out that he didn't love her, it had not broken her heart. It hadn't even touched her heart!... It had hurt only her pride. That was the thing that wouldn't lift its head. Her pride in herself. Her vanity.

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She knocked. She knocked again. There was no answer.

"Oh, bother!" Gloria said, exasperated. "I've missed him! He's gone!"

But Dick had left a light burning in his office. That must mean that he was coming back there to work, after he had had his supper.

Suddenly Gloria made up her mind to telephone Miss Briggs. Miss Briggs would be able to tell her where Dick usually ate when he was downtown. And then she would hunt Dick up.... She hated to eat alone. And, besides, she wanted to ask Dick who the "Lucie" of the letters was! She couldn't draw a peaceful breath until she knew that!

She went into a cigar store and looked up Miss Briggs' telephone number. She called it.

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"This is Mrs. Briggs.... Miss Briggs' mother," the old voice went on. "I think Susie's working here. You could probably get her at the office.... Who is this talking, please?"

But Gloria had hung up. She stood silent as a statue in the telephone booth.

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