

GLORIA

THE FLAPPER WIFE

Gloria Finds the Silver As Well As Dick Absent and Goes to Mother Gregory.

GLORIA GORDON, beautiful flapper, marries DICK GREGORY, a struggling young lawyer. Her idea of marriage is fun and fun clothes. . . but no work or children.

She refuses to cook or keep house. And she swamps Dick with debts for her clothes and a new automobile.

Gloria becomes infatuated with STANLEY WAYBURN, an actor, who and Wayburn with MAY SEYMOUR, a flapper, make a jolly foursome.

Wayburn is offered a job on the New York stage. Gloria lends him \$200 of Dick's money to help him out.

Dick almost dies with rheumatism. When he recovers, DR. JOEL SEYMOUR, husband of the flapper May, sends him away for a rest. Gloria refuses to go with him, because MOTHER GREGORY, whom she hates, is going.

As soon as Dick and his mother leave on their trip, Gloria sets out for New York. She goes straight to Wayburn. But he spurns Gloria, and tells her he has just married his loving woman, a Russian actress. Then Gloria tries everywhere to land a job as a chorus girl, but fails. At last she comes home to Dick. He takes her back into his house, but not as his wife.

Gloria finds that everyone in town knows about her affair with Wayburn. Her friends snub her on every side. And Dick seems to have slipped away from her, too. On night Gloria finds him having dinner with MISS BRIGGS, his secretary. She goes home and waits until midnight for Dick.

By Beatrice Burton

CHAPTER XLVIII

SUDDENLY as Gloria stood there on the stairs, she was afraid.

The empty house seemed to be filled with strange sounds and rustlings. The pantry door creaked. . . And was something or somebody moving in the dark dining-room?

With her heart in her mouth, Gloria dashed back upstairs to her room. She slammed and bolted the door behind her.

The lights in her room were blazing. Without stopping to turn them off, she plunged into bed and pulled the covers up over her head like a frightened child.

She lay trembling for long minutes, listening for the sound of Dick's key in the lock. . . Where in the world was he at this hour of the night? Why didn't he come home? He had no right to leave his wife alone in the house half the night while he was out, doing. . . what? That was the question!

Surely he and Miss Briggs weren't still working in Dick's office? Where were they? Together, somewhere? . . . The questions swarmed like bees in Gloria's brain. She forgot her fear. Anger toward Dick took its place.

She swung her feet over the side of the bed and stepped out onto the rug. Then she put her head out of one of the open windows and looked up and down the street. But it lay empty and still under the hushed calm of midnight.

As Gloria sat there, she heard a sound in the house, itself. It came from downstairs. . . the harsh tinkle of metal against metal. Someone was at the silver in the sideboard drawers! Burglars!

Gloria pressed one hand tight to her breast. She felt as if her heart were jumping out of her body. . . it beat so fast. She tiptoed across the room to the door that led into the hall. She put her ear against it and listened for a long time. But there was no further sound.

Gloria began to wonder if she really had heard a noise, downstairs or not? Perhaps her tired brain had been playing her tricks. . . Well, as she sat there, Dick came she would find out if anyone had been in the house? She wouldn't be afraid to go downstairs to the dining room then. But why didn't he come?

GLORIA got back into bed, and lay waiting for him. Oh, but wouldn't she wait for him! The very idea! Leaving her alone as if she were Lola! Though, or any other faded, middle-aged wife!

She'd let him know she wasn't going to be treated like this. . . She'd leave him first! That's what she'd do. She had done it once, and she'd do it again!

The next thing Gloria knew it was morning. Her room was filled with the warmth and sunshine of early June. Through the open windows came the sound of a neighbor's lawnmower and the sweet smell of fresh-cut grass.

Gloria smiled and stretched herself like a tiger-kitten. Then she remembered last night. She frowned. Softly she went out into the hall and listened at Dick's door. No sound within! She opened the door and peeked into the room.

The bed had been slept in. Dick's pajamas lay on the rug beside it, where he had stepped out of them. There were ashes in the tray on the bedside table. He had been home part of the night at least. . . And he had gone that morning without even saying good-bye!

Gloria closed the door of his room. "I'll be jiggered if I make his bed or clean up the place!" she said to herself. "He can't treat me like a servant and expect I'll be one for him! Because I won't!"

While she was waiting for her tub to fill, she went downstairs to the dining room. The drawers of the



Softly she went out into the hall and listened at Dick's door.

sideboard were piled one on top of each other on the floor. They were empty.

So there had been burglars in the house last night! And they had taken every piece of the flat silver that had been Mother Gregory's wedding present! Not so much as a spoon was left!

Gloria shivered. Then it was the burglar she had heard taking the silver out of the sideboard drawers! . . . And it must have been the burglar whom she had seen moving stealthily against the darkness of the dining-room, last night! He must have been in the house when she entered it alone!

Why, she might have been shot, if she hadn't run upstairs when she did!

Gloria burst into tears of panic at the terrible thought.

Well, she'd stand no more of Dick's neglect. The very idea of his sending her home alone at 9 o'clock at night to a dark house! And then leaving her alone in it until 'way past midnight! She bet she'd never let him do a stunt like that again to her. . .

HE bathed and dressed. She didn't stop to dust or make beds.

But, leaving the house just as it was, Gloria closed the door of it behind her, and started out. She was going to see Mother Gregory! She'd let her know whose fault it was that Dick's marriage was a fizzle!

She was through talking to Dick. . . through pleading with him to treat her decently, Gloria told herself.

But she knew she was only trying to bolster up her vanity. Under all her bravado, she knew that the fact of the matter was that Dick was through with her! . . . She had seen it in his eye the night she had come home from New York. She had heard it in the indifferent tone he used when he talked to her. And his indifference was maddening her. She couldn't stand it!

She had always had love and indulgence from Dick. He had treated her like a beautiful, spoiled little girl. And now he hardly looked at her.

Gloria's heart was heavy as she rang the doorbell of the old Gregory homestead. Maggie opened the door for her.

She found Mother Gregory eating her substantial breakfast of ham and eggs, rolls and coffee. Her face was flushed with too much food.

"Well, Gloria!" she cried in her rich, full voice. She got up from the table.

She put her well-rounded arms about Gloria and gave her a peck on either cheek.

Gloria shrugged her shoulders. "Have it your own way," she said. "But I know that I found them having dinner together on the quiet, last night. I left them at nine o'clock. They said they were going to work for a while at the office. And at one o'clock when I fell asleep, Dick hadn't come home!"

MOTHER GREGORY all but fell into a chair that stood opposite Gloria. Her eyes were wide, and her mouth stood open with surprise.

"I can't believe it!" she cried at last. "And how do you know when the burglar was in the house?"

"I heard him," Gloria answered. "I thought I heard Dick come in and I ran downstairs. Then I saw some one in the dining-room and I rushed back to my room and locked myself up. . . I was scared to death!"

"You couldn't have been so terribly frightened," Mother Gregory mused, "or you wouldn't have dropped quietly off to sleep at one o'clock, as you said you did."

At that Gloria flared up. "Well, I'll tell you just how frightened I was, if you want to know. Madam Gregory!" she said, furiously, "I was so frightened that I'll never stay alone in that house again, after dark! . . . And if your son wants to have a love affair with his office girl he'll have to work at it daytimes!"

"Gloria!" exclaimed Mother Gregory in the severe tones of the vice president of the Home Women's Club, "You're vulgar!"

"Vulgar nothing! I'm just telling you the truth about your beautiful son!" Gloria sneered. "When I married him I thought he was a plaster saint, too! But I've found out all about him. . . Look at those!"

She pulled some of the "Roxie" and "Lucie" love letters and pictures from her handbag and threw them into Mother Gregory's lap.

Dick's mother laughed her comfortable deep laugh, as she picked them up.

"Roxie and Lucie Gilchrist!" she said. "They were both in love with Dick. First Roxie was—and then Lucie. They're both married now, though. And Lucie has a boy! . . . Dick had a lot of girls in his day, Gloria. But that doesn't prove that he isn't what you call a 'plaster saint'!"

Gloria's lip curled. "All right," she said. "But you can't explain his staying out most of last night with Susan Briggs!" (To Be Continued)

HE girl curled herself up in a little ball on the hard leather window seat in Mother Gregory's room. It was a room as plain as the woman who slept in it. . . a woman who scorned silk underwear and make-up as only Mother Gregory could scorn them! There were no cushions in that room, no ruffled curtains, no dressing-table laden with perfume and powder boxes.

Mother Gregory stood before the walnut dresser and began to hook herself into an elaborate black dress, made in a style that had been popular when Dick was a baby! . . . "What did you come to see me about, Gloria?" she asked again. "We'll—I, Gloria began, "last night we were robbed of every bit of that lovely flat silver you gave us for a wedding present! Some one broke into the house!"

Mother Gregory threw up her plump hands. "My stars! . . . Dick's reported it to the police, of course!" she said. "Why, that silver has been in the family for a hundred years!"

Slowly Gloria shook her pretty head. "No, Dick hasn't reported it to the police. Dick doesn't know anything about the burglary," she said calmly.

Mother Gregory looked at her with her sharp black eyes. "You see," Gloria went on without flickering an eyelash, "it all happened in the middle of the night when Dick wasn't at home."

"When Dick wasn't at home!" Mother Gregory echoed in a loud surprised tone, "Well, where on earth was he at that time of night, then?"

"That's what I want to know," Gloria answered, "but I have every reason to think that he was with Miss Briggs."

The words exploded like a bomb in the quiet room.

"With Susan Briggs!" Mother Gregory repeated. "With Susan Briggs! Oh, no, Gloria!"

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