

# GLORIA

THE  
FLAPPER  
WIFE

Gloria Tells Dick of Miss Briggs' Confession of Love.

THE STORY SO FAR:  
GLORIA GORDON, beautiful flapper, married DICK GREGORY, a struggling lawyer. Her idea of marriage is fun and the clothes . . . and no work or children.  
She refuses pointblank to do her own housework, and hires a maid. But Dick has to let the maid go because he can't afford to pay her wages. Gloria has swamped him with debts for her clothes and a new automobile.  
She becomes infatuated with STANLEY WATKIN, who has money, and when he leaves town to go to New York, Gloria follows him. But he smokes her. It is only then that Gloria realizes that she never really loved Dick. She tries to land a job as a chorus girl and fails.  
Discouraged, she goes home to Dick, who takes her back, but not as his wife. While Gloria is at home one night, the house is burglarized. Dick doesn't get home until early morning. Gloria wonders if it has been with his secretary, Miss Briggs, of whom she is extremely jealous.  
But next morning she learns that he was at the house of DR. JOHN SEYMOUR, who has killed himself in dependence over the love affair of his wife, MAY, and JIM GORDON. Gloria goes to Dick's office to tell him about the burglary, but he is not there. She writes from Miss Briggs' confession that she is in love with Dick.  
Gloria goes home determined to win Dick again. She does her best to clean up the house, and show the world a good wife she is going to be. But she forgets to give Dick a surprise. She unwillingly offers to take her out to a restaurant.

By Beatrice Burton  
CHAPTER LII

GLORIA followed Dick out to the garage.  
She couldn't help noticing how his shoulders drooped and his step lagged when he walked.

"Rikky," she said, using the old nickname, "I'm sorry as the dickens that I didn't have dinner ready for you tonight. I can see that you're dead tired. How much sleep did you have last night?"

"Not a wink," Dick answered. "How could I sleep when my best friend had just killed himself because of his utterly worthless wife? I can't figure out why John cared so much for a good-for-nothing creature like May. . . . He should never have married her in the first place! That was his big mistake."

Gloria hit her lip. She wondered if Dick thought she was any better than May. Perhaps he was sorry that he had married her. . . .

Well she wouldn't let him be sorry! She had turned over a new leaf.

"Where are we going?" she asked as the car turned in Fortieth St.  
"We're going to invite ourselves to mother's for a meal," Dick answered grinning. "I'm sick of restaurant food. I'm fed up on it."

Neither of them said another word until they swung into the broad driveway of the Gregory homestead.  
It looked so peaceful and welcoming tonight, with its lights streaming out from the windows. . . . its rose bushes blooming beyond the sweep of lawn.

Mother and Father Gregory were just sitting down to dinner, when Dick and Gloria walked in.

"Well, isn't this a fine surprise!" Mother Gregory cried. She got up and put her arms around Dick, while Father Gregory beamed at them over his horn-rimmed spectacles. Gloria felt left out in the cold.  
"How did you know we were going to have strawberry shortcake for supper?" Mother Gregory asked. She turned to Gloria and gave her the briefest of kisses.

"I smelled it!" Dick answered, laughing. "Blocks and blocks away I smelled it. . . . above the rich perfume of gasoline that accents our town! And it drew me, like a magnet!"

HE looked like a boy as he sat down at the table. . . . care-free and happy, in his old home. Gloria watched him with narrowed eyes. She hadn't seen him like this for weeks.

Mother Gregory bustled around the room, getting out plates from the china cabinet, and napkins from the sideboard.

"Leg of lamb tonight—and fresh peas. I shelled them, myself, and they were a job," she said. But there was no complaint in her voice. She was a born housekeeper and she loved hard work. . . . really enjoyed it!

Gloria looked around the room. How different it was from her own dining room at home! She couldn't help thinking that.

There the silver was tarnished, and the chairs were dusty.  
Here there were fresh roses in the center of the snowy cloth. Every thing. . . . glasses, forks and furniture. . . . that could be made to shine, was gleaming. There wasn't a speck of dirt anywhere.

The salad was crisp cold, and the things that should be hot were hot. The meal was delicious.

"Mother Gregory," Gloria said on a sudden impulse, "You're wonderful! If I could keep house just half as well as you I'd be satisfied. And by jinks, I'm going to learn how to do it!"

Mother Gregory laid down her

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"Why should I tell you a lie?" she asked.

She gave Gloria a searching look of his children. She was sure of that.

"My dear child!" she said. "That's the most sensible thing I've ever heard you say! And if you need any help, come to me for it!"

"Give her your recipe for strawberry shortcake," Dick suggested. "You said you were going to have shortcake, didn't you?"

Mother Gregory laughed. "As Gloria would say, 'we are going to have nothing else but'!" she answered. "Gloria, you carry out the plates while I cut the shortcake. It's Maggie's night out."

Gloria picked up the platter and took it out into the big, clean kitchen.

"I've been thinking over what you told me this morning," Mother Gregory said to her, quietly. "About you and Dick living apart. . . . I wouldn't worry about that if I were you. It will turn out all right, after a while. Dick's pride's hurt. . . . and I can't say I blame him."

Gloria shook her pretty head. "No," she said. "It goes deeper than that. Dick doesn't care for me any more. . . . I saw it in his face tonight. And it isn't that he hates me. He's just indifferent to me. He's through with me!"

HE went into the dining room and came back with a pile of plates, and a vegetable dish. "Then, whom is he in love with?" Mother Gregory asked. "If he's not in love with you, . . . depend upon it, a man of Dick's age is always in love with somebody or other. That's nature."

Gloria stood silent for a moment, watching Dick's mother pile whipped cream on the shortcake.

"Yum, yum! Doesn't that look delicious?" she said childishly. Then she sobbed. "I told you this morning that I think he's fallen in love with Miss Briggs. And I do think so!"

"Nonsense!" Mother Gregory said sharply. "Dick likes you just as well as he ever did! You just settle down and be a good wife to him, and he'll be tickled to death with you."

She nodded vigorously, so that all the beads on her black dress sparkled.

"I really haven't been a good wife, have I?" Gloria asked humbly. Afterward, she wishes she hadn't said that.

Mother Gregory was the soul of frankness always. She opened her lips, now, and let Gloria have the truth about her wifehood. . . . or at least what she considered the truth.

"You never were any kind of a wife at all to Dick!" she said. "You were a drag and a worry to him. . . . a pretty toy. And any toy becomes tiresome, after a while."

She put her hands on the girl's slim shoulders, and looked at her gravely.

"Months ago I told you married life wasn't a game, but a business, didn't I?" she asked. Gloria nodded.

"You believe me now, don't you?" Mother Gregory went on. "And I'm going to tell you something else. Nothing ties a man to a woman like a child. You take my advice, and give Dick a son or two. . . . and a couple of daughters. . . ."

Tears smarted in Gloria's eyes. It was too late now, for that wise advice. Dick no longer loved her. . . . He didn't want her to be the mother

back from lunch today, she was gone. Her mother called up to say she'd been taken sick. I suppose her feelings were hurt because of something you said to her. . . . You were rude enough to her last night! . . . Now you promise you'll stay away from my office!"

Gloria tossed her head, wifely. "She wasn't sick because of anything I said to her!" she exclaimed. "It was something she said to me that made her sick. I'll bet you!"

Dick sat down in his armchair and filled his pipe.

"Well, what did she say?" "Told me what a crush she has on you," Gloria answered calmly.

Dick leaped to his feet. "What?" he almost shouted.

"Sure she did," Gloria said. "She told me she's been in love with you for years and years. She said that right up to the time you married me. She hoped you'd fall in love with her. . . . That's why she hates me so! She thinks I came between you."

Gloria stood in front of him, watching to see how he took it.

He took it, unwillingly. He didn't want to believe this thing that Gloria had just told him, although he must have guessed it.

"Are you telling me the truth, Gloria?" he asked at last.

Gloria threw out both her little hands and grabbed the lapels of his coat. "Why should I tell you a lie?" she asked.

"I don't know," Dick answered. "But you've told me a good many of them, you know, in the last few months."

Gloria winced under the sting in his quiet voice.

"Well, whether you believe it or not, it's the truth," she said. "She's in love with you. . . . and you've got to get rid of her. You'd better hire a man for your secretary next time. He won't fall for your fatal beauty!"

HE sat down on the davenport, and picked up a magazine. She turned its pages idly. Every nerve was waiting for Dick's answer.

He took his pipe from his mouth, emptied the ashes from it, and began to scrape its bowl with his pen-knife. Gloria could see that he was thinking hard. His eyebrows were pinched into a frown.

"No," he said presently. "I'm not going to discharge Susan Briggs. She's a good worker. . . . and she never upsets me. No matter how nervous I am, she soothes me, somehow. . . . just the sound of her voice, the way she looks."

He was trying, in his awkward man's way, to tell Gloria that the very sight of Susan Briggs' quiet eyes gave him a sense of profound placidity and strength. . . . the thing he needed.

"Why?" Gloria cried out. "You're talking about her as if you're crazy about her. You are in love with her! . . . I've told you so, before. And I was right!"

(To Be Continued)

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