

GLORIA

THE FLAPPER WIFE

Gloria, After a Quarrel with Dick, Again Decides to Leave Him.

THE STORY SO FAR: GLORIA, beautiful flapper, marries DICK GREGORY, a struggling young man. He has no money, but no work or clothes.

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. She swallows him with her debts.

She becomes engaged with an out-of-town actor, STANLEY WAYBURN.

When he leaves town, to go to New York, she follows him. But he leaves her.

Then she tries to get a job as a chorus girl and fails.

Gloria begins to realize that she is afraid to go home to him.

At last, however, she goes home. Dick takes her in, but not as his wife. Gloria wants him, but he is not in love with her.

She begins to cook for him.

He says, "I wish you wouldn't speak about me in that way, Gloria."

Dick interrupted. He looked annoyed.

"Oh, blah! I'll do as I please," the girl answered, bitterly.

"I'm getting tired of being slammed all the time.

It's time I began to pan a few people myself . . . You treat me like a doormat and expect me to like it!"

"If I've treated you like a doormat I'm sorry," Dick apologized.

He got up and walked out onto the front porch.

THAT was just like Dick!

Whenever he was getting the worst of an argument, he got up and walked away. He was simply maddening!

Well, this was one time when he wouldn't get away with it!

She went right out after him, and say what she had to say to him!

Suppose the neighbors did hear it . . . ? They probably had a few family battles themselves at times.

But just as Gloria opened the screen door to go out, Dick walked down the front steps and around the house to the back door.

Gloria ran upstairs and put a touch of rouge on either cheek. Then she followed him out to the garage where he was tinkering with the car.

"Dick," she said in a quiet, even voice, "I can't go on living like this.

For three days I've been doing my housework just as well as I know how to do it . . . and I'm willing to go on with it, if you'll only treat me decently. Won't you, please?"

Dick turned toward her. He had taken off his coat and rolled up his sleeves. His hair was ruffled and there was a smear of grease across his cheek. He looked boyish . . . absurdly boyish.

Gloria took her handkerchief from her apron pocket and rubbed the grease from his face. Her hand stopped to his shoulder and stayed there.

"Dick," she said, "I'm so unhappy . . ."

She looked up at him. In the dusk her eyes were black and luminous, her mouth like a dark flower. "I want you to kiss me, Dick," she murmured. "Let's be friends . . . It's terrible, living at arm's length, this way . . ."

"Two falcons in a snare," Dick quoted. He moved a step or two away from her.

"Now, just what do you mean by that?" Gloria asked sharply. She meant Dick to quote things that she didn't understand from the books he was forever reading.

He shrugged his shoulders. "It doesn't matter," he said. "But I know, myself, that we can't go on living this way. It's impossible. I see it, too."

GLORIA drooped. She braced herself against the side of the garage door.

"Well, what are we going to do about it?" she asked. "Do you want me to leave you? Do you hate me as much as that, Dick?"

He did not answer at once. He took his old pipe from his pocket and filled it.

"It's like this, Glory," he said finally. "I don't hate you, at all. But Wayburn . . . he's there, between us, somehow. You see, I can't ever kid myself again that you care about me. I know that you're in New York with him now, if he wanted you to be there . . . A man doesn't forget a thing like that. No one but a boob like me would ever have had you in his house again, on any terms . . ."

"But I didn't do anything wrong," Gloria defended herself. "What are a few silly kisses?"

Dick sneered.

"Yes . . . I know that's the way you look at it," he said, "but no decent woman would let any man her husband kiss her, Glory. She wouldn't soil herself that way."

Gloria tossed her head impatiently.

"Oh, you're so old-fashioned," she answered. "Think of all the petting that goes on at wild parties. And it doesn't mean a thing."

"That makes it all the more rotten then," Dick pointed out. "Love isn't a game or a toy. It's bigger than any of us . . ."

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