

# MAD MARRIAGE

by LAURA LOU BROOKMAN Author of "HEART HUNGRY", etc.

## OUR BOARDING HOUSE

—By Ahern

## OUT OUR WAY

—By Williams

BEGIN HERE TODAY

GYPSY McBRIE, 19-year-old typist in New York office, is miserable and homesick when she arrives at Chicago. Just returned from a year and a half of Paris studying art, no longer cares for Jim, her fiancé. Jim, a boy she has known since she was a child, is infatuated with MRS. LADY GYPSY, a woman who considers herself a patron of art. Gypsy becomes disgusted with her job and impulsively resigns. She accepts an invitation from her wealthy cousin, ANNE BROWNE, to stay at the place of another guest at a formal dinner to seal her parents' divorce. She leaves to stay in the next room and opens the door to see Jim. Jim has been waiting for her. He is JAMES WALLACE, guest of the Tarnagani, who has entered by the fire escape to avoid meeting Gypsy.

Wallace tells Gypsy he just has been hired by his fiancee. She admits she had the same experience. To spite her, he has come to the hotel to ask Gypsy to marry him. She first refuses, then later accepts.

They are married next morning and take the train for Forest City. At Jim's insistence, he is joined by his aunt, MRS. ELLEN WALLACE, who makes no secret of her hostility to the girl.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The tour of inspection included a drive past the Italian villas and its imposing neighbors. They rode on to the Glendale clubs, the more exclusive of Forest City's two country clubs, then took a side road and came back past the golf and tennis, where Jim said he played golf whenever he could spare the time.

GYPSY marveled at the level distances stretching off to each side of the road. It had been such a little while since they started and here they were in what must be country!

"Jackson's creek is off that way," Wallace said with a wave to the right. "Used to swim there when I was a kid. Skate, too. Do you like to skate?"

"I've never tried it," Gypsy admitted. "The only sports I had much experience at as a kid were jumping rope and playing hop-scotch. That's about all you can do on a city sidewalk!" She laughed.

Jim turned toward her. "Say, that must have been tough! I'd forgotten you've always lived in New York. Wait a minute—there's something I want you to see—"

He turned the car and they drove in silence until presently he pulled up at the side of the road.

"Now, then," said Jim, "look at that."

To the left across a low valley lay Forest City. The girl had not realized they had come so far. The towers of the half dozen high downtown buildings stood out boldly.

In either direction stretched lower structures, straggling city blocks with occasional dark patches that were trees or open spaces.

Beyond this nondescript skyline, reaching over and above them, was the bluest of blue skies, flecked here and there with fleecy cloud masses. The cold yellow sunshine gave the panoramas brilliancy.

The girl's eyes were fastened on the azure distance. "It's wonderful, Jim," she said.

"I always like to come to this place," he told her. "Discovered it myself. He began to point out numerous landmarks, when suddenly he stopped.

"You're shivering, Gypsy. Why didn't you tell me you were cold? That little coat you've got on isn't enough to keep you warm. Why didn't you say something?"

She insisted she was not cold. There was no robe. Wallace started to take off his over coat, but she indignantly refused it. He turned the road back toward the city.

"We'll stop at the Carlton," he announced. "Get you warmed up there and have lunch. No use to drive clear out to the house."

The Carlton was Forest City's best hotel. Jim was greeted by several acquaintances as they walked through the lobby and Gypsy felt eyes upon her.

The head waiter called Jim "Mr. Wallace," and was solicitous about their luncheon.

It was an excellent meal. The warm room flushed Gypsy's cheeks becomingly. After the morning out of doors both of them were in good spirits and hungry.

Jim had been telling her about an amusing law case and the girl was laughing when she noticed two women across the room. Mother and daughter they seemed to be. Gypsy saw that the older woman was watching them and resented her scrutiny.

"Jim," she said finally, "who is that woman across the room? She's been watching us."

Wallace turned his head, glanced back quickly. "Some one I don't care to meet," he said in a lowered voice. "Let's get out of here."

It was too late. Already the

couple had arisen and were walking toward them.

MRS. HALLIE BUTTERWORTH, resplendent in a purple ensemble, with her daughter behind her, less obtrusive in blue, headed across the room directly toward the table at which Jim and Gypsy were sitting.

Gypsy had barely time to be subduced when "They're coming over here!" before Mrs. Butterworth was beside them.

"My dear Jim," she began in a gushing voice, "we've heard the news and just had to come over to see if it's really true! Is it—I mean this?"

Jim had risen. "How do you do, Mrs. Butterworth," he said. "Hi, Daphne. This is Mrs. Wallace." He turned. "Gypsy, I want to introduce some old friends—Mrs. Butterworth and Miss Daphne Butterworth."

"Then it is true!" beamed the older woman nodding her head vigorously as she spoke. "And this is the little bride!"

She stepped back, concentrating her smiles on Gypsy, but before any one else could speak she was off again: "We heard this morning you were married and I declare you could have knocked me over with a feather!"

"Jim's one of our boys, you know. To think you're actually married. My—must have happened all of a sudden, didn't it? Young love, I suppose!"

Her voice carried to half a dozen surrounding tables. Jim's face burned with slowly mounting color.

"Won't you sit down?" Gypsy suggested.

"Oh, no, thank you, my dear, but we can't stop. We're on the wing. Yes—on the wing! Where is your home, Mrs. Wallace? I suppose you're a stranger in Forest City?"

"I've always lived in New York," Gypsy told her.

"So that's where you were married. Daphne and I had been wondering. Quiet wedding, I suppose, since none of Jim's relatives were there. They weren't, were they?"

"I'm glad to know you, too, Mr. Harrison," Gypsy said. "Jim's talked a lot about you."

"That so?" The older man looked up at Wallace doubtfully.

Wallace began eagerly, "Mr. Harrison, this is Gypsy. Brought her down to have a look at the place upstairs."

Mark Harrison grasped the girl's hand heartily. "Glad to know you, my child," he said. "So you're the young lady Jim's up and married. Glad to know you!"

Harrison waited for them to come nearer. "Hello, Jim," he said.

Wallace began eagerly, "Mr. Harrison, this is Gypsy. Brought her down to have a look at the place upstairs."

"Not a very pretentious house for so wealthy a man to live in... I'll go up and ring his bell...."

"I know right where the bell is, because our kids always ring it on Halloween!"

"Oh... I'll go in with you, if you don't care... I always wanted to set a peek at old man Hector!!

ANSWER THE DOOR BELL, MUSGRAVE, AND IF IT'S THE DETECTIVE I SENT FOR, SEND HIM IN TO ME AT ONCE!!

FRECKLES ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE THIS STRANGE OLD CHARACTER — AND HERE IS HIS GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

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