MAD MARRIAGE

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

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GYPSY McBRIDE, 19-year-old typist in a New York office, meets JIM WALLACE at the home of her wealthy cousin, ANNE TROWBRIDGE. Gypsy is miserable because she has learned ALAN CROSBY, back from a year and a half in Paris studying art, no longer cares for her.

Wallace tells Gypsy that he has been jilted by his fiancee. To spite the girl he cares for, he asks Gypsy to marry him. They are married next morning and depart for Forest City, his home town.

At Jim's home they are greeted by his aunt, MISS ELLEN WALLACE, who immediately becomes hostile to the girl. After a few days Miss Wallace moves to a cottage down the street.

She arranges a family dinner party at which Gypsy meets the other relatives, MRS. SOPHRONIA NICHOLSON, who is Jim's aunt, and LUCIA WALLACE, his cousin, snub Gypsy while another cousin, ABBIE MANLEY, is friendly.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The temperature of the room seemed to have dropped. "You're a stranger in Forest City, I understand?" Mrs. Nicholson said.

"I—well, I was. I'm beginning to feel acquainted now."

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THE older woman's brows rose. She was about to speak when some one touched Gypsy's arm. "I'm Abbie Manley," said the newcomer. "One of the new cousins.

"Charles and I have been trying to get over to see you ever since we heard you'd arrived but I've had a touch of the grip. We're going to come soon, though."

"We'd love to have you," Gypsy answered. "Come any time."

Abbie Manley's brown hair was beginning to show touches of gray. She was slightly taller than Gypsy and heavier. Her plain face was frank and friendly.

She had taken the girl's hand and was still holding it. "You're a pretty girl," Abbie went on. "I hope you're going to be happy here. Jim (turning to the young man) "let me congratulate you."

"Thanks, Abbie. Isn't Charles here?"

"I think he's telephoning." As she spoke a slim, middle-aged man in gray appeared in the doorway. "Oh, there you are!" Abbie exclaimed. "Come meet the bride, Charles."

Manley exchanged greetings with the others and shook hands with Gypsy. Aunt Ellen again took command of the group and was bustling about for chairs when a shrill voice from a corner piped up:

"Mother—aren't we going to be introduced, too?"

Gypsy turned. She had not noticed the two children on the sofa against the wall. There was a boy who looked about 12. He wore horn-rimmed glasses and his shoulders were bent over a book. Beside him sat a girl probably two years older. It was the girl who had spoken.

"Come here, children," said Lucia Wallace. The pair stood up, the boy still clinging to his book.

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THE children came forward dutifully. The girl had light hair hanging in too-tight ringlets. She looked like her mother, but instead of being slender she was squarely built and chubby. Her name was Lucia Elizabeth.

"I'm pleased to meet you," simpered the child in a manner that evidently had been rehearsed. Junior, the boy, put forward one hand and mumbled something inaudible.

"What have you been reading?" Gypsy asked.

"Kidnaped!" Junior answered. Without another word he faced about and returned to the sofa.

Gypsy smiled down at the little girl. She was wondering how to begin a conversation, when Lucia Elizabeth solved the problem.

"You're our aunt what?" she asked.

"Aunt what?"

"Well—this is Aunt Ellen and that's Aunt Abbie. You're our aunt what?"

"Oh, I see!" Gypsy spoke, enlightened. "My name is Gypsy. Aunt Gypsy, I guess."

Lucia Elizabeth stared at her, then began to laugh. "What a funny name," she exclaimed. "Aunt Gypsy—isn't that funny?"

"Lucia Elizabeth!" her mother said severely. "Where are your manners? It's not a funny name. It only seems so!"

"But it is funny!" the child protested loudly. "It isn't a name at all. Why, gypsies are funny old dirty people. I saw some last summer. They tell fortunes and steal babies——"

"That will do!" Lucia Wallace's voice was stern. Her daughter looked down sullenly, then sank to the edge of a chair.

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BY this time Gypsy's cheeks were flushing. Charles Manley spoke to her and she turned toward him with evident relief. He placed a chair for her and she sat down. Gypsy felt she should address her hostess.

"The house looks lovely," she said to Miss Wallace. "I don't see how you managed to get everything settled so quickly."

Aunt Ellen was sitting erect in her favorite high-backed chair. "I shall be comfortable here," she said. "Of course, after being accustomed to a big house, it's quite a change." She interjected a sigh. "But I'll get used to it."

"Aren't you going to show us the place?" Jim asked.

"I'll show you," Abbie Manley volunteered. "I've just been through it myself. You and Gypsy come with me—"

Aunt Ellen held up one hand. "I think a little later, Abbie," she said, but Mrs. Manley was on her feet.

"We'll have time," Abbie insisted. "Come on, Gypsy. There's a lovely view from the bedroom window and the kitchen is wonderful."

Jim leaned back. "You two go along," he said. "Ben's telling me how to get rich quick."

Gypsy and Mrs. Manley stepped into the hall. There were six rooms in the cottage, but they were large. The central hallway (counted as a room) divided the living room from the dining room.

Back of the living room was Miss Wallace's bedroom and at the back of the house was a room for the maid. The pantry and kitchen were on the other side.

Abbie led the way, pointing out the attractive features. They came to the kitchen last.

Abbie drew back the door and they were greeted by the inviting odors of cooking food.

"Hello, Harriet," called Gypsy from the doorway.

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THE cook turned and her face lighted. "Howdo, Mis' Wallace," she answered. She put down the potato masher, which she had been wielding vigorously. 'It's good to see you here."

"My—what a fine kitchen you have," Gypsy said smiling. "Everything's so fresh and white I guess it's a pleasure to work in such a place. We miss you, Harriet. Say, something certainly does smell good!"

"There isn't a better cook in Forest City than Harriet," Abbie Manley put in.

Harriet's face showed that she was pleased. She began beating the potatoes again. Gypsy glanced over her shoulder. Miss Wallace had come up behind them.

"Well, really——!" Ellen Wallace's tone was exasperated, "if there's to be any dinner in this house tonight I'm afraid Harriet will have to be allowed to get it on the table.

It's nearly 7 o'clock, Abbie. Don't you think you two had better go back to the living room?"

Miss Wallace soared into the kitchen. Gypsy and her companion fled. "Never mind Aunt Ellen," Abbie whispered into the girl's ear. "She's on her high horse tonight. It doesn't mean a thing."

Fifteen minutes later they were ushered into the dining room. Gypsy and Jim were given places of honor at Aunt Ellen's right.

Ben Wallace sat next to Gypsy and directly opposite was Lucia, his wife, Mrs. Nicholson sat in state at the foot of the table.

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HARRIET served the soup. It was an elaborate five-course dinner and the food was delicious, but Gypsy had no appetite. Whenever she looked up Lucia Wallace's small dark eyes were watching her belligerently. Jim made several attempts at general conversation, but gave up the effort.

Junior squirmed in his chair and was scolded for refusing to eat his spinach. Sophronia Nicholson made use of the opportunity to deliver a lecture on how grateful small boys should be for a good home and plenty of nourishing food.

There were other little boys in the world, she assured Junior, who would be glad to eat spinach. Spinach would make him a strong, big man. Somehow (as Jim had predicted) this led to launching forth on the harships Uncle Ezra endured at Andersonville.

"Your great Uncle Ezra was a great man," she concluded, eyeing Junior. By some chance her glance fell upon Gypsy. "Did your ancestors take part in the war?" she asked. "I mean of course the Civil war?"

"I don't think my relatives were in this country then," Gypsy told her.

All other conversation suddenly died. Out of the silence Mrs. Nicholson spoke again. "And from what country, may I ask, did they come?" The woman leaned forward waiting for Gypsy's answer.

"From Ireland."

"Ireland!" It was Lucia who spoke with a slightly rising inflection.

"My grandfather sailed from Belfast when he was 12 years old," the girl replied steadily. "Father used to write to his cousins there. Some of them still are living in Belfast."

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LUCIA'S fluttering "Oh!" was a gasp. Out of the deadening stillness Jim came to his wife's defense.

"The Irish make good fghters, Aunt Sophronia," he said. "You'll have to admit that. There were probably a lot of them at Andersonville along with Uncle Ezra."

Lucia Wallace exchanged glances with Mrs. Nicholson. "Of course Forest City is a quiet place," she spoke in her most elegant, aristocratic voice. "Our life is very simple here, but if you'd like we might make up a foursome for golf some afternoon. I play at the Glendale club."

"I'm sorry," Gypsy answered. "I don't play golf."

"Really?"

"Well, we'll teach you," Ben Wallace said heartily. "Can't hit a ball myself, but I'm a great teacher. Jim here knows that——"

"But perhaps—er—Gypsy may prefer some other sport," his wife suggested.

Gypsy shook her head. "I'm not good at any sports,' 'she said. "I've always been too busy."

Sophronia Nicholson cleared her voice. "You—had other interests?" she asked.

The air seemed charged. Gypsy had endured suggestions of superiority as long as she could. Reaction was inevitable and it came with a flash.

"Yes," she said bitterly, "I had other interests—pounding a typewriter eight hours a day to earn a living. Trying to pay for board and room on $30 a week. That's how I've spent my time!"

Ellen Wallace dropped a fork. "Do you mean to say—!" she began but Jim Wallace interrupted. He was on his feet. "I've had about enough of this," he said.

# # #

ONCE before Gypsy had seen Jim Wallace angry, but that had been nothing like the white-faced fury with which he turned on the group at the table.

"I'll tell you what I think of you!" he cried. "I think you're a bunch of snooping, small-minded snobs. Do you hear that? Trying to stir up trouble, that's what you're doing!

"Well, it won't work and you might as well know it here and now. What right have you to look down on a person who works for a living? What right have you to think you're better than anybody else?

"I'm ashamed of you. Gypsy and I can get along without you all right. We'll do it, too—"

"Now wait a minute!" Ben Wallace's tone was conciliatory. "You don't mean all you're saying, Jim."

"Ben, you keep out of this!" Lucia Wallace delivered the command to her husband sharply.

Before she could say more, Jim had turned toward Gypsy. "Come on," he said. "We're going home."

Ellen Wallace's face slowly had congealed as her nephew spoke. Now her cheeks were scarlet. "I never thought I'd live to see the day my own brother's son could talk to me this way!" she exclaimed. "I'd never have believed it possible!"

"And I wouldn't have believed you'd invite guests to your house to sneer and make fun of some one, Aunt Ellen," Jim shot back. "Well, go ahead. You can talk to your heart's content now, only we won't be here to listen!"

Harriet, coming from the kitchen, heard the last words and dropped a teacup. There was the sound of crashing china.

Jim put his hand on Gypsy's arm and led her from the room. There was a moment's dalay in the hall for wraps and then they were out of the house.

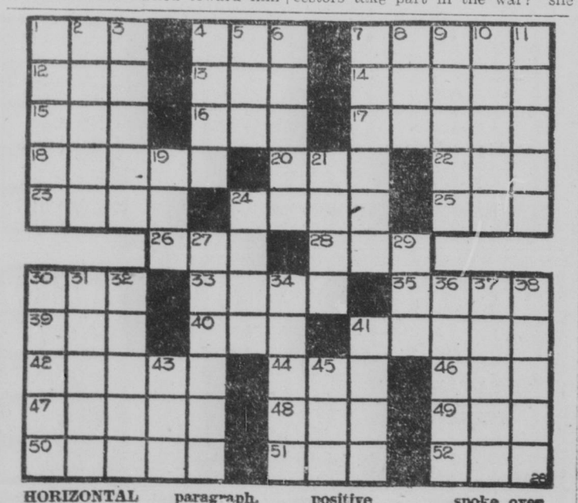
The fresh air was comforting against Gypsy's smarting cheeks. It was a cool and invigorating breeze with a faint hint of spring in it.

Twilight had turned into evening and pale stars glimmered in the cloudless sky. The street was very still.

Neither spoke. The sound of their footsteps was exaggerated by the silence. Gypsy cast a quick, sidelong glance at Jim.

(To Be Continued)

Stickers will be found on Page 10



HORIZONTAL
1 Uncooked.
4 Soft food.
7 Author of "Tom Sawyer."
12 To consume.
13 Sick.
14 To wash out lightly.
15 Cover.
16 Rubber tree.
17 Parsley-like plant.
18 Rims.
20 Branch.
22 Mire.
23 Prophet.
24 Halt.
25 Bronze.
26 Passage.
28 To question.
30 Hurrah!
33 Aaron third vice president U. S. A.?
35 Newspaper paragraph.
39 Verb.
40 Striped camel's cloth.
41 Long outer garment.
42 Due reward.
44 Honey gatherer.
46 Adverbial negative.
47 Electric positive terminal.
48 Wrath.
49 Monkey.
50 Alleys.
51 Noise.
52 Conducted.

VERTICAL
1 Laws.
2 Apart.
3 To crowd.
4 Last month Pope ——— spoke over the radio?
5 Every.
6 Plait.
7 Walks heavily.
8 To be victor.
9 The brute soul.
10 To emerge.
11 Requires.
19 Unit of energy.
21 To bellow.
24 Stump.
27 Decreases.
29 Outfit.
30 Branch-like.
31 Sphere of action.
32 Egret.
34 Furious.
36 Pertaining to sound.
37 To run away.
38 Paired.
41 Observed.
43 Fish.
45 Silkworm.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

OUR BOARDING HOUSE —By Ahern

OUT OUR WAY —By Williams

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS —By Blosser

WASHINGTON TUBBS II —By Crane

SALESMAN SAM —By Small

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES —By Martin

TARZAN AND THE GOLDEN LION —By Edgar Rice Burroughs

It took the Waziri but a short time to load themselves with the golden ingots. Before the askari had completely recovered from the surprise of the attack, they had again disappeared into the jungle with the man they supposed was Tarzan, their master. Late in the afternoon, Flora Hawkes, the three white men and a small party of the black hunters returned successful and in gay mood from their search for game. As they came in sight of camp they saw the askari running excitedly toward them. "What the devil is this?" cried Peebles. "What's wrong with the beggars?"

"Tarzan of the Apes has been here!" they jabbered. "With all his Waziri—a thousand of them. They have taken away the gold!" Flora sought out the leader. "Tell me slowly and carefully all that has happened since we left," she ordered. She listened closely, questioning him often. When the tale was done she turned hopelessly to her confederates. "It is all too clear to me," she said. "Tarzan recovered from the drug we gave him. Then he followed us with his Waziri, caught Esteban, killed him, located our camp and got the gold. That's that, and we're lucky if we get out of Africa with whole skins!"

A long time the three men and the woman discussed their situation. Flora laughed to scorn the suggestion they follow the supposed Tarzan and recapture the gold. "Not a chance in the world. You don't know him as I do!" But something MUST be done. Perhaps even now the dreaded ape-man was watching them. Until this Kraski, buried in thought, had said little. Now he looked up, grim determination on his face. "We have lost the gold," he said, "and the expedition seems a total washout. What we've lost, we've lost. You can do as you like—but I'll not go back to England empty-handed!"

"There are other things in Opar besides gold," he continued, and then unfolded his plan. "I have learned this crazy language and talked with our blacks. They tell me there's a bunch of Arabs down here stealing slaves and ivory. Only a few of them and their slaves would turn on them with our help. Here's my idea. Our party is still strong enough to overpower them. Let's get their ivory by getting their slaves to help, promising them their freedom. What do you say?" "It sounds good to me," said Peebles, "I ain't fer going 'ome empty 'anded." The others—even Flora—agreed that ivory was almost as good as Opar's gold.