

LEAP YEAR BRIDE

By Laura Lou BROOKMAN
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BEGIN HERE TODAY

CHERRY DIXON, pretty 19-year-old daughter of wealthy parents, falls in love with DAN PHILLIPS newspaper reporter. She writes him a letter, Dan reads it, Dan then, taking advantage of Leap Year, asks Dan to marry her.

The first time finds what it means to lack money, but Cherry's ambitions and her struggles with housework are discouraging.

DR. T. J. BANNON, movie critic of the News, is friendly with Cherry. She meets handsome MAX PEARSON, also on the staff.

After several weeks, Cherry's mother, Mrs. DIXON, arrives. She is kind and there is a reconciliation with parents, but pride will not allow Cherry to let them all know this.

When MRS. DIXON is stronger, she and her husband leave for several months.

July brings an intense heat wave, and there is a swimming party at a nearby resort. Dan is delayed at the office and Cherry sets out to find him. They are caught in a rainstorm and when they lose their way, at last they reach the hotel and Dan and Cherry are separated.

She goes to Harry's and he leaves. She gets into the car and after a dangerous drive arrives home.

Cherry is tired of the town and wants to go to New York.

Now GO ON WITH THE STORY.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

DAN was beside her. "Why, no," he said in a startled voice. "That isn't what I meant at all. I wouldn't go any place without you, Cherry. You know that."

"But you said you wanted to get away from all this. I don't see how we could leave. There's the lease on the apartment—"

"That's just it!" he insisted. "Leases—bills—alas something to force you into a rut! That's what I hate, Cherry. That's what I want to get away from!"

"I don't see how things would be different anywhere else."

Dan stood before the window, a mutinous figure. He rubbed a hand through his hair, pushing the locks awry.

"Oh, I suppose you're right. But, Lord! I wish something would come along to stir things up."

"I'm not used to this sort of life. I've always pushed on somewhere else when things got too tame."

The girl said nothing. Phillips turned and saw her brush her eyes with a handkerchief. He crossed the room and put a hand on her shoulder.

"Listen, honey," he said. "You know I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. Why, I wouldn't do that for the world! Just forget I said anything."

"I'm just a tramp, I guess—a nobody who doesn't realize when he's well off. You won't think any more about it, will you, Cherry? Promise me you won't!"

"But, I want you to be happy, Dan—!"

His arms were around her. "Why shouldn't I be happy? I've got you, haven't I? Say, I guess I'm just about the luckiest guy on earth."

"And don't think I don't realize it! That crabbing doesn't mean anything. Come on—I'll help with the dishes!"

He was unusually cheerful throughout the rest of the evening. After they had finished the kitchen work, they rode down town to see a motion picture.

Dan talked more than usual. It was only occasionally that he seemed to forget and lapse into silence. Then Cherry saw the brooding look return to his face.

She could not persuade herself that whatever was troubling him had vanished so easily.

If Dan was worried, he gave no indication of it during the next few days. He was punctual at meals, talked of his work, and seemed interested in Cherry's recital of each day's events.

There were more letters from Cherry's mother. Mrs. Dixon reported she had gained four pounds. She and her husband were considering a drive into Maine with some friends for a short stay.

The letters consisted chiefly of trivial bits of news. There had been a touch of hot weather but now it was gone. Mrs. Dixon hoped Cherry and Dan were both well.

There was a card from Dixie Shannon, bearing a Canadian postmark. Dixie wrote that she was having a glorious vacation and would be sorry to return home.

August proved to be as agreeable as July had been hot and unpleasant. Cherry, reading in newspaper society columns that Gretchen Allden and her mother were extending their stay at Lake Louise, that other acquaintances were summering at Newport, attending the race meet at

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