

## A Wife on Leave

By INEZ KLUMPH

Sally Brabant, a society butterfly, has just given a year's leave of absence by her husband, Richard Brabant, who hopes that she will learn something of life. She has a thriving flirtation with a man who has always been labeled "Dangerous," and is horrified to learn that, despite his position in society, he is a bootlegger. He attempts to kidnap her with the express purpose of arrest for the murder of a revenue officer, committed by one of his men. Sally is rescued by New Calhoun, who advises that she go to work. She finds herself without funds and her husband's absence and imminent arrest have rendered her unable to accept this suggestion. She gets a position under an assumed name as chaperone to a 17-year-old girl.

Claire Finch, who has more money than manners.

### CHAPTER XLIX—SALLY'S BALL AND CHAIN

It was with gratitude that Sally learned the next day that her new duties would take her to a summer resort which her friends did not frequent. When she impulsively adopted the name of Pemberton she had not reckoned with the chance that she might be seen by someone who knew her; she had thought only that it would be wise to avoid discovery by her mother-in-law, should that august personage return from Europe and hear by chance that young Mrs. Richard Brabant was acting as a professional chaperone.

Mrs. Finch departed for the West with many warnings to Sally to look after Claire. "She's so impulsive, she's likely to let her feelings just run away with her!" exclaimed the little woman as she kissed her daughter goodbye. In view of the fact that that same daughter winked at Sally over her mother's shoulder, the warning seemed perhaps more necessary than Mrs. Finch dreamed.

Mrs. Finch wished to engage a car to take her daughter and Sally to the summer resort which Claire had chosen, but Claire herself vetoed that plan promptly.

"You never meet a soul, travelling in a machine," she told Sally later. "Me for trains every time!"

She was inclined to sulk when she found herself established in a drawing room, and to urge that they change and sit in the parlor car—"where we might get acquainted with somebody," as she said. Sally groaned inwardly. Was she to find her ball and chain a common little flirt? It rather looked that way, especially when Claire insisted on leaving the door open. After a time, realizing that a young man who has passed the door all too frequently was inclined to loiter outside it, Sally began to be suspicious. Claire, who was pretending to read a book, let it slip from her lap. Instantly, and inexorably, the young man darted into the compartment and picked it up for her. Claire thanked him profusely, and he commented on the weather. It was only when Sally intervened with frosty politeness, and almost forced him to leave, that he showed any inclination to go.

Closing the door behind him, Sally turned to meet Claire's eyes. They were filled with ill-concealed disgust. They said plainly "So that's your game, is it?" Sally, flushing angrily,

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ly, returned to her seat and stared at the landscape. A common little flirt!

"Perhaps I'm unfair to her," she reflected, as Claire glowered at her in sulky silence. "She's so unattractive—and wants so much to be fascinating."

She began to sum up Claire's good

rather homelike, despite its size. It stood on the rocky shore of the ocean, its cream-colored stucco walls contrasting effectively with the tumbling green water.

It was a relief, too, to find that she and Claire were to have separate sleeping rooms, sharing only the living room of their suite. There had been some talk of their having a room together, and Sally had determined to make a firm stand if that arrangement was adopted.

She liked her room, with its gray-green, painted furniture; she would keep Dick's photograph locked in the desk, she reflected; if she had only used her own name, she might have kept the picture out in plain sight.

She arranged her dainty enamelled toilet articles on the dressing table, and dressed for dinner. She had grown accustomed to doing without her maid, but was still rather awkward, and was slowly fastening her dinner frock of midnight blue tulle when Claire burst into the room without knocking.

"Oh—I didn't rap—I meant to!" she apologized as she noted Sally's surprise. "Do hurry; I'm crazy to get downstairs and see who's staying here. Hope there are some good looking men!"

Sally followed her into the corridor slowly, with a fervent hope that the hotel would prove to be as man-less as an old ladies' home.

Tomorrow—The Matrimonial Market Place.



Sally Intervened With Frosty Politeness.

and bad points, and to compare her with girls she had known, girls whose mothers had conducted a determined campaign to make the girls as attractive as possible. There was Toots Wallace, for instance—Toots stepped on the scales the first thing every morning, and if her weight showed a deviation of more than half a pound her meals were cut down that day till the right weight was regained. There was Nathalie Alling, who went with fast foods she liked and drank quarts of milk because she wasn't fat enough. Sally went down the list of her friends, hardly one of them allowed herself to indulge in the things she liked. And the more unattractive they naturally were in appearance, the more earnest efforts they made to improve themselves.

Yet here sat Claire, fat, dressed with ill-dressed hair and a bad figure, longing hopelessly for what she might have aided herself to gain.

"I'll help her!" Sally told herself in a burst of enthusiasm. "Poor thing—she doesn't mean to be cheap; she just wants to be attractive. I'll get her to take baths with reducing salts, and diet a bit, and exercise a lot—I can teach her heaps of things she ought to know! And maybe I can somehow get her that husband she wants—only what a way to earn one's living."

Sally had never before seen the hotel to which they went; she was delighted to find it quite attractive and

put the suitcases where Humphrey

put the last sheet and snapped the suitcase shut.

"I can't stand this town any more," she said. "It was bad enough when we had a lot of money. But now—why, even Mrs. Braufeld is patronizing, insolently patronizing, and she a tailor's wife! And Mrs. Werner gave a luncheon and didn't ask me!"

"Come along," Patty urged. If Humphrey intended to live at his office, she wanted to get his things down before he went there for the night. She now dreaded having Humphrey and Millie meet.

The place was dark. It was a one-story building, containing two rooms or offices and a wash room. Beyond was the lumber yard and the little river with a dock and a flat bottomed boat moored fast, the stacks of timber and the boat black shadows against a steel blue sheen from the water.

The station, a square away, was an island of red and green and yellow lights in the darkness, with square, ugly black shapes that rose here and there against the sky. A single street lamp lighted the way between the lumber yard and the railway crossing.

Patty opened the door with her key, put the suitcases where Humphrey

meals are plain"—she refrained from saying badly cooked. "But there's always the chance that Humphrey will make good again. He's been trying to get orders, he never tried before, because he always had enough capital to speculate."

Millie folded the last sheet and snapped the suitcase shut.

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