

SMILES

GABBY GERTIE



"The girl who is well reared never puts on a bold front."



"I can see why an aviator shouldn't be a man of humor."
"Why?"
"Because it would effect his gravity."



Wife (romantically): I sometimes wish I were a mermaid beneath the dark-blue sea.
Hubby: And so do I, my dear; then you would have to keep your mouth closed or drown.

REAL ENJOYMENT

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Jack: Look at that fellow. He's way off his base.
Ruth: I know this was a crazy game.

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Married Quarters

By DAVID ISYALL

Continued

A large number of varied and in the main trivial experiences had, of course, gone to the making-up of this phase of Jim's mentality. It gave him a great and increasing gravity, and Poppy did not like grave people. He was very tender with her, but it was a kind of distant tenderness out of which the passion had gone. Poppy did not like the new Jim. She needed tempestuous wooing, continual excitement; her idea of life was living on the edge of a precipice.

It was a queer life they lived there in the old farmhouse on the edge of Lanrick Moor. It was only because Jim knew that it could not last that he was able to endure and make the best of it. He was nearly quite fit, and intended to return to his fighting unit at the earliest possible moment.

Fully aware of the value of men like himself at the front, he had no desire to shirk his duty. It would be a way out. But what to do with Poppy?—that was the crucial question. At the back of his mind a resolve was crystallising. He would pay another visit to Cudham, and ask them to take care of his wife for him while he was away. The motor bicycle made a great noise belching into the farm-yard, but no Poppy appeared. Instead Slattery's Ann, knitting socks for soldiers, came out to the kitchen door.

"Missus isn't in, sir. Been out since before lunch."

"Oh," said Bradford. "Gone out to lunch, I suppose; did she say where?"

"No, sir."

"Perhaps she's at the canteen," he suggested. "Is Miss Cotman's car here?"

"Yes, sir, and she came in for a minute. Miss Cotman did, but they didn't leave to go to the hut together."

"All right, thank you. I'll pop down to the hut and see. I wanted to take her into Markyate. Thank you, Ann; I dare say I'll find her."

This was the casual order of their life at Archer's the one seldom knew or seemed to care what the other intended to do. It was a surface carelessness, however. Both cared a good deal more than they permitted themselves to show.

Bradford was anxious and wished to do the best for Poppy, but had somehow missed the way. Poppy, on the other hand, was furious, because the devotion of the lover appeared to have merged into the indifference of the average husband. She did not like the change. He leaped from the machine, stopped it, and sauntered into the house to refill his cigarette case from the metal box. Poppy got through a tremendous lot of cigarettes in these days, many more than Jim approved. In fact, he had never got accustomed to seeing the perpetual cigarette in her sweet mouth. None of the women among whom he had been reared would touch tobacco in any form. It simply wasn't done, though both Jane and Sylvia, anxious to be in the mode, had essayed it with disastrous results, which had wrought a complete cure.

The little living room, a homely enough place, with plenty of accommodation for love, who needs no lordly halls for a dwelling-place, bore traces of Poppy's presence. A letter torn to tatters had scattered itself outside the wastepaper basket, as if a very impatient hand had sent it there, and, missing the mark, had not troubled to tidy up. Jim, naturally a tidy man, stooped down to pick up the bit without the faintest idea of spying. His face reddened a little, however, as he recognized the writing and a few words on one of the scraps: "So it will need to be good-bye, darling." A fierce longing to piece the fragments together, almost over-came him, but he fought it down. He had a code of honor, he might be careless, but he would be no spy on his wife's actions. His hand did not falter as he gather-

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so far, at Archer's Farm, to wreck three lives.
The letter with its betraying words had closed another chapter in Poppy's life. She had received it undoubtedly that very day, and, acting on the usual impulse, had run out, but whether? He chewed the unlit cigarette between his lips while his level brows

knit, and his face became sad with a great sadness. He turned about to seek the canteen, without the smallest hope or expectation of finding her. But he would see Jane, who must have seen her more lately than himself, and might even furnish him with a slight clue.

Feeling forlorn, anxious, troubled beyond measure, he took a match from the stand on the mantelpiece, and had just lit it when he heard the boom of a heavy motor in the lane. He was familiar with the lighter buzz of Jane's Araminta and knew that this was a heavy car, possibly a limousine. Someone coming to call, perhaps, he must make good his escape!

He was not quick enough. He had only reached the bicycle when the big car, which he recognised as a hired one from the "Saracen's Head," pulled into the yard.
He stepped forward to speak through the open window to the lady who occupied it alone. To the best of his knowledge he had never seen her

before. She was elderly, and rather awe-inspiring, though he noted a faint kindness in her eyes. He saluted, and was conscious of a very rapid and careful scrutiny from the occupant of the car.

"I expect you wish to see Mrs. Bradford? I am sorry, she is not in the house," he said courteously. "I have just come to see her myself. Having an off afternoon, I thought she would like a spin. Can I tell her who has called?"

(To be Continued)

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