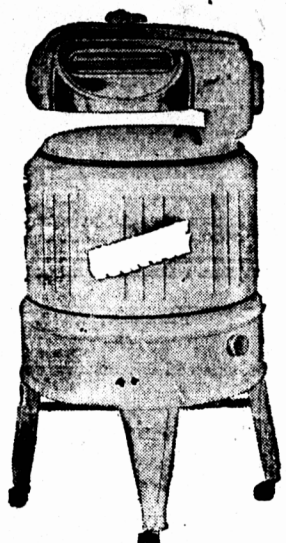


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WHAT HAPPENED  
TO THAT? I WAS  
COUNTING ON  
IT TO WRAP  
A PICNIC  
LUNCH  
IN!

WHO'S THAT  
BLUE  
BEARD?  
ANOTHER  
HOOPLE  
DREAM  
CHARACTER

EGAD! YOU MALE SHREWS  
WOULD CRITICIZE NOAH FOR  
NOT HAVING TELEVISION ON  
THE ARK!— THIS CHAP IS  
THE ILLUSTRIOUS MESSER  
MARGO HOOPLE, AN IDOL IN  
THE COURT OF KUBLAI KHAN  
BEFORE MARCO POLO  
WAS BORN!

WHAT BEAK GOES  
PRETTY FAR BACK

### Marrying Mark

By  
VIOLETTE KIMBALL DUNN

Continued

"Don't be a goat," said Mark pleasantly. "Anybody can see with half an eye it's only a children's party. Why do you suppose Miss Tredway and I are hiding here?"

"I—really wondered—" murmured Elise. She was a little frightened after she had said it, but Mark gave no hint that he had heard. "Valerie had a birthday a couple of days ago," explained Mark. "Ever since Shirley gave her a party, she trotted about and she wanted to return a few invitations. No grown-ups allowed. Even Shirley didn't come and she was really responsible. Shall I ring for coffee and a liqueur for you?" asked Mark.

"No, darling," said Elise. She had come to them from a dull dinner at her mother's.

But looking at her as she gazed pathetically into Mark's face, Lucy could have sworn she hadn't eaten for at least a week, and was refusing, to spare even the servants unnecessary trouble. She had never, she thought, met anyone who managed to convey so much by what she didn't say.

Alice and another maid came in and carried the table away. And presently there was a sudden rush of feet, and laughter in the big hall, and the party burst in headed by Valerie. Elise stared at her in astonishment. She could hardly believe the poised and laughing girl whose dancing all-peats of pale blue satin twinkled straight across the room to Lucy.

"Darling," cried Valerie, "may we dance now? Or must we wait a while? What shall we do?"

"Of course you shall dance," Lucy laughed. "Whenever you're ready."

She straightened a flower on Valerie's shoulder and looked at Elise, who raged at the maternal quality of the small scene. She could hardly bear the implication of the confidence and affection between the two. Neither did she miss the sudden droop of Valerie's young mouth as she followed the pressure of Lucy's hand and saw Elise, whom she had overlooked in her first rush with the others into the room.

"How do you do?" she said, trying to sound as cordial as she could. She waved a hand toward the chattering group around Mark. "I think you know everybody—"

"I dare say long before you did, darling," Elise allowed herself to say. "Their mothers and fathers were my friends before you were born."

"How nice," said Valerie politely. "Come on," she called to the others. "O course you're coming. Father and Lucy? Oh, and Mrs. Waterford. Father will you promise to dance with me at last once? It won't be a party unless you do. Rex, maybe Lucy will dance with you if you promise not to walk all over her feet. He's terrible," she told Lucy.

Rex Davies grinned down from his sixteen years. He was already crazy about Valerie, and he tucked Lucy's hand into his didn't care what she said to him, arm with what he felt was complete sophistication.

"Shall we get the elevator? Or don't you mind walking? And may I have the first dance?" he asked in a breath.

"The very first," she promised. "and I don't mind walking a bit. In fact, I'd rather. What are two flights of shallow stairs among friends?"

He looked at her impishly. "I'll bet I can beat you to it," he whispered.

Lucy gathered a handful of peach velvet and took to her heels. She arrived only slightly behind him at the door of the small ballroom. The orchestra was already there, in their places behind a mass of chrysanthemums whose pungent scent blended with hothouse roses in a perfume Valerie felt she could never possibly forget. Her own dance, in her own house, with her own friends—and almost all because of Lucy!

The orchestra was playing now, and couples slipped out on the shining surface of the floor. Mark was coming toward her. He was really going to ask her to dance! He said in the most grown-up way, "Will you dance this?" And then they were merging with the rest and smiling at Lucy, being taught a new step by Rex over in a corner.

"Why, Father," she said amazedly. "Why, you're a marvelous dancer! I mean you really are!"

"Thanks," said Mark, trying not to laugh. "I like to be taken down from the shelf and dusted off once in a while. You're not bad yourself, shall you turn you over to Rex. Maybe you'll dance with me again later. I have to go now and ask Elise."

Elise stayed until half-past eleven. If it had been possible to throw the party off balance, her presence would have accomplished it. As it was, she was mostly ignored. Mark danced with her only once. He made it a point to ask each of the fluttering gay bits of femininity who were Valerie's friends, and he danced again with Valerie. The rest of the time he spent with Lucy, whose steps seemed to melt into his with a peculiar magic.

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"She must have been very lovely," "Oh, my dear, she was more than lovely. She filled the house with her presence. But a man's wife is the pivot around which a

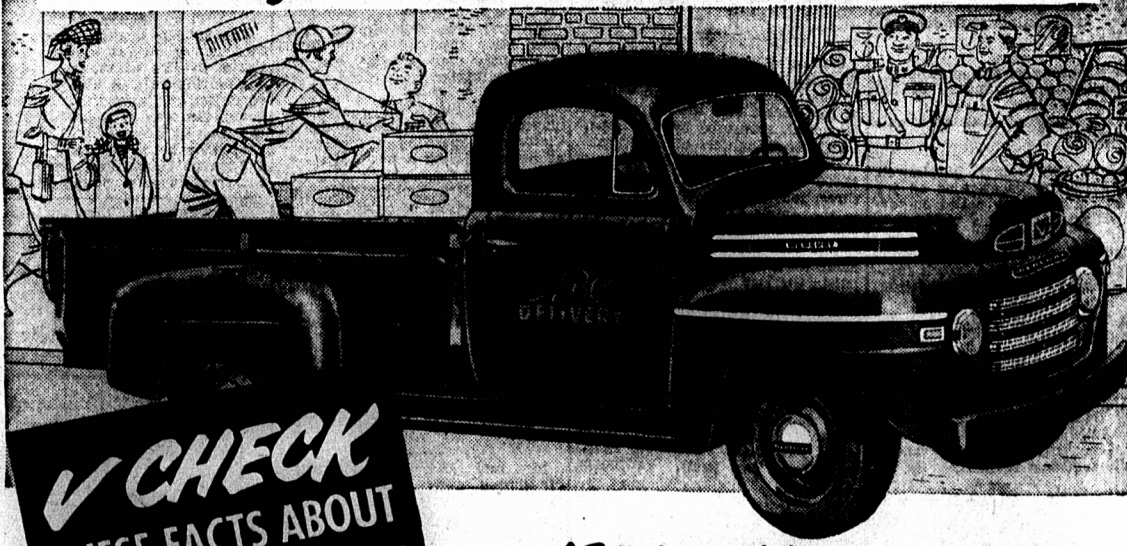
home revolves, don't you think?" "Naturally," said Lucy. "You mustn't ever think we don't appreciate all your services here," cooed Elise. "All of us—I mean Mark's intimates—realize

how hard you must have worked. And what it must have cost you. "Cost me?" asked Lucy. She felt they were getting nearer now to the main idea. (To Be Continued)

ENGLISH LONG-BOW Bows and arrows were used in warfare as late as 1588, when they were used on the British ships while fighting the Spanish Armada.

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