Mr. and Mrs. Sallie

—being the Confessions of a new wife ···· by Gladys Baker



Illustrated by Paul Robinson

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"Sallie!"

No answer.

"Better put a little pep in it or you'll have a forlorn bridegroom waiting at the church."

I gave one last look into the long cheval mirror and caught my breath, I had not had a chance to see the whole effect of my wedding gown on account of the many girls who had crowded my room in their friendly little efforts to assist the bride. Now I had asked them to leave. Only Marjorie Chenworth, who was to be my matron-of-honor, remained.

I couldn't for the life of me, believe the tall, slender figure reflected in the glass. The slim, ivory-tinted gown with its myriad rhinestones twinkling under lengths of misty tulle, gave me an almost courtly air. I, who had been many things, but never courtly, in all my life. The veil, with its coronet of soft orange- blossoms framed my face and helped my hair And then I noticed my eyes. There was a new graveness about them—a sort of hushed reverence that I now recalled in the eyes of every bride.

"Well, don't you think you've admired yourself enough, old thing?" persisted Marj coming up to me and looking me over from the top of my filmy veil to the white satin slippers with their buckles of Rosepoint lace.

"No, Marj, honestly I'm not doing that. I was just thinking, that's all."

"What about?" gently.

"Oh, just wishing I were exactly what I seem to be in the glass. I don't know how to express it—it's something you feel when you're a bride, I s'pose. There's a sort of whiteness and cleanness and purity that makes you wish you'd lived in a convent all you life."

"Rats, Sallie," comforted Marj, "to hear you talk one would think you'd been a wild woman with a lurid past and you've never done anything real bad at all."

"I khow, but that isn't the point. I wish now with all my might that I'd never taken a cocktail or smoked a cigarette or let anybody kiss me but Curtiss. Oh, Marj! if you just knew how much I'd give to come to him fresh and unspotted, even the least little bit, by the world." My voice quavered.

"Bless its heart. Curtiss doesn't want a saint. Some of the most perfect idols have feet of clay. Besides he wants you just as you are, Silly. So come on now your father has sent up a dozen times for you to come down. He's dying to see his Sallie. And I can't blame him, for honestly, I've never seen a bridier bride."

My wedding night. Before me stretched the crimson aisle of historic old St. Johns. The rich notes of the organ were filling the hushed immensity of the church with the ever-thrilling tones of Lohengrin's immortal march. The wedding procession had wended its way before me up the unusually long aisle. The bridesmaids were lovely in their period gowns of pastel tinted chiffon, their arms laden with summer blossoms of every hue. I placed my hand on my father's arm and with nervous fingers held fast to the huge bouquet of orchids whose dainty lavender petals fell in graceful cascades to the hem of my gown.

I had often wondered what were the thoughts of a bride as she walks down the aisle. Mine were disconnected. Strange. Impressionistic. There came to me a thousand perfumes from flowers which banked the altar and transformed the entire church into a bower of unbroken white. Innumerable candles, in tall candelabra, sent their flickering glow over well-filled pews and on all sides were murmurs of approval which herald the bride. The heavy odor of valley-lillies broke in upon my thoughts.

Would I ever see Curtiss in all that crowd? Why hadn't I chosen the Church of the Good Shepherd which was friendly and small? At last I saw him—. His eyes met mine. My heart leaped and I looked quickly down. Now the minister, in the sumptuous robes of the Episcopal church, repeating the same questions we had discussed among ourselves each time there was a possibility of any of us becoming a bride. "—obey." I had always maintained that I would leave that out. Now it would have been a sacrilege to cut any word from that sacred rite.



"I will," I replied, so softly that only my lips moved. I had always pictured myself speaking out bravely when it came my turn. I had intended that my voice should carry to the farthest end of the church. It should be unwavering and firm.

Curtiss was saying "I will" and in his response there was just the right amount of proud conquest and decisive calmness that sent little thrills of joyousness through my entire being.

Now side by side, we were returning down the long, long aisle to an murmur of the guests had risen to an excited buzz. I thought of the many times I had been a bridesmaid and how we had all walked back from the altar wreathed in smiles. This was also, I remembered, an established custom of the bride. But somehow I coul'n't smile. There are some happinesses too big for emotional expression. Too enveloping to permit any outward sign. Such was mine.

The reception at home. More flowers, more music, more chatter, and endless congratulations couched in the same sentiments that were expressed at wedding of Cana in Galilee, I haven't a doubt. How much more sacred, I thought, is the small wedding where one is surrounded only by friends. Here also were acquaintances, who came merely to appraise the decorations, the bridal equipment and even the groom!

"Sallie, I've never seen you so reserved. Why you look perfectly like a saint," giggled one "friend of the family," as she passed gushingly by, "but never mind," she threw back at Curtiss by my side, "that hollier-than-thou attitude with Sallie won't last."

"Don't worry about her," Curtiss squeezed my hand, "the exberance on my face will make up for any bit of wistfulness in yours, Little Saint,"

We exchanged a glance of magic meaning before the next guest came down the line.

"You'll return from your European trip with a dozen scalps of titled foreigners at your slender waist-line," predicted a little man who had lost his first youth but was determined to play the part of the gay gallant. As if I would flirt on my honeymoon! I, who loved Curtiss so. What did they mean?

"Just because I've been more or less frivolous all my life am I never to leave the butterflys?" I returned.

"Ah, that's just it, the butterfly type!" the little man replied. "Exactly, ma cherie. Its something that's incapable of change. Either one is or one isn't So don't think for an instant that matrimony is going to make you over temperamentally, my dear. In your case it will just add piquancy and charm."

I hated him. Oh, if it were all over and Curtiss and I were quietly alone. I was so utterly weary of it all. As usually the case, there had also been endless parties up to the very eve of my wedding day. A custom I am quite sure is a relic of barbarous days.

Just then Ted Billings came reeling by. Too much champagne. Only that feeling of chartiy which forgives all past grievances when happiness fills the heart, prompted me to invite Ted. Now I was sorry that I had. He pointed to the orchids that formed my exquisite bouquet.

"What-ho! A touch of lavender. Why, Sallie," he thought he was funny because he laughed uproariously and staggered out of sight.

"He doesn't mean any harm," Marj whispered, seeing the blush which had suffused my cheeks at his reference to the well-known joke. "Nobody's serious about anything, any more," she decleared.

Just the same I was praying for the free and easy comraderie which had existed among my friends.

The hours, with leaded wings, passed by and when, at last, I was dressed in my traveling costume, I sent for my father to bid him good-bye-away from the guests.

"Father, I have changed, haven't I? And yet they'll never believe I intend to be anything but a flapper wife. I adore Curtiss and I'll never, never look at anybody else." I poured out my heart.

"There, there," he patted my hand, "a bride shouldn't worry about anything in the world and certainly she shouldn't mind the harmless raillery of her friends. That always follows a girl who has been unquestionably a belle."

"But I worship my husband and I'll always be true to him, even in my thoughts," I replied vehemently.

"Your mother said those very words to me, Sallie, on her wedding night." A shadow of sadness clouded my father's eyes and entirely removed the smile from his face.

I wondered what he could have meant.

(To be continued next week).



"What's the meaning of this?" he exclaimed. "Yesterday you gave me a portion twice as large as this."

"Where did you sit yesterday, sir?"

"By the window."

"Oh, that accounts for it. We always give people by the window larger portions. It's an advertisement."



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