



Happy Go Lucky

by MRS. HARRY PUGH SMITH

CHAPTER VI
Champ Chapters, managing editor of the Westhaven Clarion, fires Tony Blake. But Barbara West, his secretary intercedes. Tony saves himself by scoring a news beat and gets a raise in pay. Taking Barbara to dinner and a dance Tony proposes and is accepted. They were married in the church with Tony's mother and sister, as well as their many friends present. After the ceremony Nora Fields gave a reception at her home. From there they left by car to spend their honeymoon at Asbury Park. Barbara becomes impatient because Tony much like his friends is always promising to do big things but never gets started. Tony's mother blames Barbara for the fact that Tony was seeing so little of his own family.

"Yes," Barbara said, "I insisted on keeping my job when I married Tony. I shall go on keeping it until we are out of debt. You should know, even better than I, that Tony has no idea of the value of a dollar." She was sorry the moment the words were out.

"Dear Barbara," murmured Mrs. Blake, "isn't it really hard-boiled, she's practical."

Being a man, Tony was utterly unable to see that his mother's remarks were not really flattering to his wife. It seemed to him that his womenfolk went out of the way to be nice to Barbara, and that she refused to meet them even half-way.

"You must not stay away so long next time, my dear," said Mrs. Blake when Tony and Barbara were leaving. "I can't tell you what a pleasure it has been having you."

"Yes, indeed," murmured Lily. Nessa kissed Barbara. "No wonder you can make brother do anything you please. I wouldn't mind being henpecked by you myself."

"That's what you think," muttered Barbara. "They resent me; they have right from the first."

"Baloney," protested Tony. "You've said yourself you're jealous. Only I don't think you should be like that with Mums and the girls."

She was a little late going to lunch. When she came into the restaurant the rest were leaving. "Hello Barbara," murmured Martin Fagg. "Mind if I sit down at your table for a minute? I want to tell you something."

"I can't think of anything you and I have to tell each other, Martin," Barbara said coldly.

He flushed. "That's what I want to say, Barbara," he said humbly. "I know you have a perfect right to be disgusted with me, but you can't be as disgusted as I am with myself. I don't know what got into me at the party that day. If you could forgive me, Barbara, it would be such a help. It's bad enough to have lost you to another man, but losing your respect is worse."

"Forget it, Martin," she said kindly, "and so will I."

His face lit up. "Thank you," he said, and added in an earnest voice, "I could get by if I thought you were still my friend, Barbara."

"There is no reason why we shouldn't be friends," said Barbara a little impatiently.

"I'd like to think if you ever need help, you'd come to me," he said humbly.

Her lips curled slightly. "I don't expect to have to send out any SOS's, Martin, but if I should I will bear you in mind," she said and rose to her feet.

Martin walked back to the office with her. "I banked a thousand dollars in my savings account last year," he said proudly. "I'll double it this year."

"That's nice," she said with no enthusiasm. "I wish you all of the best, Martin. Here's where I turn in. I'll be seeing you."

She did not really mean to see him again. She was merely using a slang expression, but Corine Lucas was just behind her and heard it. They walked upstairs together. "I thought you were off with the old love, Barbara," she remarked. Barbara shrugged her shoulders. "Being married doesn't keep one from being civil to old acquaintances," she said curtly.

Tony was late getting home. "Greetings!" he exclaimed, and putting his arm about her waltzed her across the kitchen. "Boy, Skeezicks, have you got steak and everything?"

Apparently he had completely forgotten their disagreement, illogically enough she was provoked to find him in no need of being won over. "Yes, we have steak," she said in a tone none too gracious.

"And Avocados," chortled Tony. "Is it a birthday or something when you loosen up, you go the whole way, don't you?"

Barbara flushed. I don't believe I've actually starved you since we've been married, or have I?" she inquired.

Tony sniggered. "Don't be like that sugar, I'm all a-twitter. Cant you see?" He did look flushed and exultant.

"What's happened?" asked Barbara, still feeling let down.

"Gloria's back!" exclaimed Tony. "Isn't that a break? I had lunch with her today."

Barbara stigmatized. "I thought you had to go over to Laketon on a story."

Tony's eyes danced. "I threw the office a curve." He looked exactly like a small boy who knows he has been naughty but expects to be petted for it. "You haven't asked me about my big news!" he

exclaimed. Gloria told Pinckney Law about my play and he has promised to read it. No wonder I forgot the job. He drew a long breath. "If Law agrees to produce the play, I'm made, kid. There isn't a better man in the business."

"I know," admitted Barbara. "But he can't produce it till you write it."

Tony grinned ruefully. "That's exactly what Gloria said. She talked to me like a Dutch uncle. She said if I hoped to amount to something I'd better act my age. And believe me, she's right." All during dinner he went on and on about what a swell person Gloria was to take such an interest in his career.

Barbara would not let him helen with the dishes as usual. She was astounded to find Tony shooting paper wads at the wastebasket which was full of crumpled-up sheets of paper. He grinned at her, scratched his ear, put another page in the machine, and began to type fast and furiously. "How is it going?" asked Barbara.

"It isn't," admitted Tony duefully. "I can't seem to get off to a start." He spoiled five more sheets. He pounded the typewriter. He finished a second page and a third and a fourth. He was no longer floundering around. He appeared to know exactly where he was going. Barbara held her breath. At eleven Tony ripped page ten off the machine and held it up triumphantly. Thus endeth Scene One! he cried.

"Honestly, Tony? How marvelous!"

"Maybe it isn't any good. Want to hear it?" he asked, looking eager but very shy about it.

"Love to!" exclaimed Barbara. She curled up on the couch while he read. This was exactly what she had dreamed of—Tony doing his play at last and depending on her for encouragement and inspiration. And the first scene was good. She was sure she was right about that. It had life just as Tony had, and it sparkled too, like him.

"Of course it needs a lot of polish," he said when he finished, giving her a self-conscious smile. "Naturally, this is just a rough draft."

"It's good, Tony," said Barbara. "It's awfully good."

He squeezed her hand. His eyes were a little misty. "Guess I'll phone Gloria," he said. "I don't believe she thought I'd ever get a word down on paper."

He picked up the telephone. "Thank goodness you gave me the works at lunch today, Gloria," he said. "Otherwise I never would have got down to work on the darned thing."

Barbara did not know what Gloria said next, but Tony laughed. "Sure I'll remember who gave me my start after I get to be a rich and famous playwright," he said. "You're darned tooting I will. You've been a peach, Gloria. How's for having lunch together again some time?" Barbara's hands clenched. Tony nodded into the receiver. "That's settled, then," he said. "Bye, Gloria; and thanks a million."

He was beaming when he came back to Barbara. "I'm going to have lunch with Gloria next Wednesday. I should have the first act done by then. At least the rough draft. Gloria's dying to read it."

"I suppose so," said Barbara in a thin voice.

Tony glanced at her quickly. "You don't mind my having lunch with her, do you? See, can discuss the play and all."

Barbara shrugged her shoulders. "Don't be silly," she said sharply. "You can lunch with Gloria whenever every day if you like."

He came over and put his arms about her. "Don't be like that, Skeezicks. I told you I'd a thousand times rather lunch with you. Barbara averted her cheek. "I'm not mad, I'll try not to be silly about it, Tony."

Tony did not have the first act of his play finished when he took Gloria Havener to lunch Wednesday. He had made a substantial progress on it, and, to everyone's surprise, he worked every night the ensuing week, letting nothing interfere. He completed Act One the following Friday. "Work is fun after you get your teeth into it," he said to Barbara naively. "It's been swell, hitting the ball."

"You haven't been bored?" faltered Barbara. It was she who saw straight from dinner to the typewriter. She did not want him to hate her because she was trying to get him out of his lackadaisical ways.

"Bored?" exclaimed Tony. "It's been grand, kid! Of course," he added, "a feller couldn't keep his up indefinitely."

"Of course not," agreed Barbara quickly. "That's why we must get some money ahead—working capital, you know. It's too hard on you to run your legs off all day for the newspaper and then grind away half the night at your play. Especially in this heat."

August had come in with brazen skies and soaring thermometers. Barbara had never found a summer more trying. She came home from the office every night feeling completely limp and there was still dinner to get and the dishes to wash.

Tony had sent his mother a large check on the first of that month. Since he and Barbara were not running around, their combined salaries went a long way. Barbara had it all figured out that by October they would be completely out of debt. They had only to save what they made and they would have enough to finance

them until Tony's play began to bring in money. "After that it will be plain sailing," she explained.

When he finished the first act of the play, he asked Gloria to come to dinner. "I want to read it to her," he said. "Her opinion at this stage will be worth everything."

It was a sultry breathless night and the kitchen in the flat was like an oven. Barbara had been kept late at the office for extra work. By the time she rushed home and prepared a company meal, she was tired and nervous. She was also bitterly conscious of the fact that her hair needed a fresh set and that both her organic dress and her complexion had wilted before the guest arrived. She need not have felt so agitated about her appearance, Gloria scarcely glanced at her.

"Thanks for a swell feed, kid," murmured Tony when they rose from the table.

Gloria smiled sweetly at Barbara. "I envy you domestic women. Life must be so uncomplicated when one's talents lie in that direction."

Thinking of her hot stuffy kitchen, cluttered with soiled dishes and pots and pans, Barbara made a grimace. "You'd be surprised," she said.

"Now for the big moment," Gloria murmured.

"I—I hope you like it: the play, I mean," said Tony, and gulped.

Gloria laid her hand caressingly on his arm. "I expect I shall."

When Barbara rejoined the others, Tony's face was shining. Gloria had said the first act had punch and clever situations. "It needs a lot of going over," she warned. "It's pretty amateurish in spots and the dialogue creaks."

Tony's face fell. "I was afraid of that." He tried to grin. "Whoever told me I could do a play, anyhow?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Successful Parenthood

REACTIONS OF PROBLEM CHILDREN

Adults sometimes forget in dealing with an unruly boy or girl that a problem child is a child with a problem. If you can discover what it is—and that isn't easy, for often the child doesn't know himself—and help him work it out—your own problem of unsatisfactory behavior on the child's part will usually disappear.

Children haven't the experience to analyze problems, as adults should be able to do, and then solve them rationally. So they react in one of three general ways: (1) They refuse to face the situation and try only to forget their difficulties. Here we have the habitual daydreamers, the radio addicts who pass up outdoor play to stay at the radio hours on end, the movie gluttons who sit through a show two or three times. Occasionally these children retreat into illness, an unconscious habit which may make lifelong invalids of them.

(2) Another misguided way in which children meet problems is to pretend they don't exist. Mary is unhappy because her sister is prettier than she. So Mary pretends it is silly to comb your hair nicely or put your clothes on with care and really tries to look her worst. John is bewildered because his sister, a year younger, gets better grades in school than he does. So he makes fun of her studiousness and refuses to put any effort into his own school work. To punish Mary for slovenliness and John for laziness is to begin at the wrong end, like polishing the far lenses of a field glass and leaving the eye pieces smudged.

Instead Mary should be reassured about present day standards of beauty. Tell her today that the girl with all the breaks so far as natural beauty is concerned is often overlooked for a less pretty girl who takes the trouble to acquire dash and charm. Explain to John that girls as a rule mature mentally earlier than boys, and that it isn't unusual for a younger girl to appear smarter than a boy in school—but that when they get out into the world the boy, if he has applied himself in school even though not brilliant, is likely to leap ahead of her in accomplishment.

(3) Then there are children who fight back at their problems. This is the healthiest and most normal response but is perhaps most often misunderstood by adults. Because even these children who stand up to their difficulties rarely have the wisdom or experience to fight them directly so they strike out in all directions. Perhaps a boy is rebelling because he can't play games or get

along with people as well as his brother. But he finds that misbehaving brings him as much attention or more than the older boy gets, so he kicks up a continual rumpus. Though this is better than retreating in meekness, or pretending he doesn't want to play games or be liked, it can be very uncomfortable for the rest of the family. Instead of wasting his energy in tantrums, an aggressive child needs help in finding a game or other activity for which he has a special knack, and which can be developed until he, too, has a skill to be proud of.

Often it takes someone outside the family—the child's teacher, an understanding aunt, a consulting psychologist—to put a finger on the difficulty which is making a youngster a problem child. Modern parents seek such help as readily as they take a child to a dentist to find the cause of an aching tooth.

HABIT OF USING IMPROPER WORDS

One of life's darkest moments is that day when your nicely drot up little boy or girl bursts into the living room with a broad new line of slang or "bad words". This usually happens when the minister's wife is visiting. What to do at this embarrassing moment? should you hurry Junior out of the room, or speak to him sternly or just pretend you didn't hear anything?

It may comfort you to know that most children go through this stage sooner or later. Bad words and slang are just part of growing up. Children like to roll exciting new words off their tongues—it makes them feel like "regular fellows." Like chicken pox, this kind of language is catching—it is passed from one to another but children do recover from it in due course of time. If then parents and others at home habitually speak politely and decently the "bad language" epidemic usually clears off—like the spots in chicken pox—leaving no ill effects.

Naturally you will have to make your own child understand that certain words are not acceptable to nice people and that you don't like them and don't want them used in your presence. But you need not treat your youngster as if he has committed a crime. Just let him know that he has committed an offense against good taste. Chances are he knows it already and was really trying out his new found vocabulary just to shock you. You will probably wonder where he learned those words, and will blame them on that ill-man-

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