

# APRIL ESCAPADE

By KATHLEEN NORRIS

## SYNOPSIS

Mary Kate O'Hara is in love with Cass Keating. Christopher Steynes, a friend of her employer, proposes that she play the part of his wife for one night in order to discourage a Russian countess who is on his trail. Mary agrees; it means enough money to let Martin, her brother, go to Germany to study medicine, and Steynes is absolutely trustworthy. She tells no one of what she is going to do.

## CHAPTER XIII.—(Cont'd.)

There was a silence. Then the girl unexpectedly laughed.

"It's crazy, I guess," she suggested mildly.

"I don't see it," Christopher Steynes said stoutly.

"Well, it all depends. If anything goes wrong, it's crazy," she said. "And if everything goes right, it's only a joke!"

"And there's more in that than meets the eye!" the man assured her. "Want some violets?" he asked idly, as they walked out.

"Oh, no, thanks!"

"Don't you like 'em?"

"No. I mean of course I love them. But my young man's coming in after dinner," she explained composedly.

"Of course. Well, then, Mary, it's good-bye until I meet the five o'clock train at Burlington tomorrow night."

She gave him her hand.

"Good-bye."

"This is my bus," he said, pausing at the curb, where a car was parked.

"It's a Siroano."

"And is that a good make?"

"Tolerably."

"You imply that it's a very good make indeed," Mary Kate said, undisturbed. "But they all look alike to me, except fivers. I can always tell one of them."

"Most people can," Chris said politely. "I can't offer to drive you home," he regretted.

"I should hope not!" said Mary Kate.

"Taxi?"

"Taxi! I have only to walk over to the Geary car, right across the street here and it goes within a block of home."

"I have a husband's anxiety about you, naturally," Chris reminded her. "I can imagine! Well, in two days it'll be relieved forever," the girl countered.

Christ lifted his hat, and she flashed him a farewell smile. Then he got into the beautiful car, all cream leather and red trim, and buzzed the starter, his face thoughtful. And Mary Kate, her own expression serious, crossed teeming Market Street, looked vaguely at a protecting traffic cop, and fumbled in her black leather bag for a nickel.

She was presently jammed on a car, hanging on a strap, wedged in between other wearied and swaying persons. But she was conscious of nothing but the confusion and excitement in her thoughts.

The long block on Broderick Street was cool and twilighted. Grit and rubbish had been blowing idly along the street during the wild spring day, but now the wind had stopped. There was peaceful sunset light behind the shabby houses toward the west; the sun was gone, but a pinkish glow still lingered in the high windows of downtown department houses.

To the little shabby houses tired office workers were returning; children skirmished noisily along the sidewalks, carrying bread. Pat O'Hara sat on the little steps that descended through a bulkhead to the street, before the house, and spun a tin buzzer on a string.

"You're late, Sis," Pat said, in his sweet, reproachful voice.

"Am I, darling? Oughtn't you to have your heavy sweater on. Pat, I was kept at the office."

"Mart foamed the office," Pat said puzzled.

"Oh—?" Her first slip. She had to watch her step, now. "Well, it wasn't really at the office. I had to buy some—commercial stationery, and

things," she fumbled "and got my hair washed—not my hair washed, either, for I did that Sunday. But I was delayed."

Pat had lost interest. He accompanied her to the kitchen, Mary Kate conscious of nerves already shaken under the strain of unfamiliar untruth.

"Mother," she asked, cutting corn-bread into squares with an almost vertical knife, "which is worse—to do a thing that is wrong, but looks all right, or a thing that is quite all right, and looks wrong?"

"Anyone who'd ask you a question like that wouldn't be responsible, and the Lord would hold them guiltless, whatever they did!" Mrs. O'Hara retorted for an instant from the business of dishing up dinner.

"Well, of course!" the girl agreed, abashed.

"No, but which is it—which is it, Mary Kate?" little Regina asked, assisting her, her anxious little fair face raised to Mary Kate's adored one.

"Don't burn your hand, darling. Why, of course it's doing the wrong, no matter how safe it looks, that is the sin, don't you see? And doing the right thing is always right, no matter how bad it looks!"

"But you oughtn't to give scandal, ought you, Mary Kate?" Tess asked conscientiously.

Her dark face was flushed to gipsy beauty as she stirred some creamy compound in a sauce pan. She appealed to the inflexible authority.

"It's wrong to set a bad example, even if what you're doing isn't what it looks like, isn't it, Mother?"

"Don't let that catch on the button," was Mrs. O'Hara's mysterious reply.

Tess recommended her arrested stirring briskly. "Where's Tom?"

"Tom was here after school, and he went out, and he said he'd be back!" someone supplied. They all sat down, Mart suddenly appearing in their midst, from upstairs, looking clean and neat, and weary.

"Lecture tonight, Mart?"

"Yep. Anyone see my yellow fountain pen?"

"I saw that sort of orange one, Mart. Tom had it."

"That's Tom's big one. I gave it to him myself. A man came into the office selling them for sixty cents—"

"Eat your potato, Mary Kate."

"Mother, you want me to be simply gross!"

"Suppose you murdered a man—I mean suppose you had to," Regina, fascinated by the topic of crime and scandal, began again interestedly.

"Would that be setting a bad example, I mean if you had to—?"

"You'd never have to," Martin assured her discouragingly.

"Oh, Mart, suppose he was killing you?"

"But that wouldn't be murder! That'd be self-defence."

"No, but listen, Mart." This was Mary Kate, deeply indeed, although no one suspected it, painfully interested. "Suppose I did something—suppose you and I were brother and sister, and we went down and took a house at Carmel—"

"You are brother and sister," the literal Tess said in surprise.

"No, but suppose we took a house at Carmel, and everyone thought we were married—to other people, I mean, and that Mart had a wife, and I had a husband—"

"Why couldn't we simply tell them we were sister and brother? Lots of Mary Kate laughed, pondered, a minute.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Tom, who had entered with a rush of cold air, thrown his coat and hat in a corner, and wedged himself in between Pat and his mother, now seized a plate, helped himself ravenously to everything within reach, and said authoritatively, as one who has given the problem deep thought.

"Listen, suppose I'm working for a man, and his brother is a drunk and a bum, and all that, and my employer tells me to take all the money I can find out of his brothers' pockets every day, and somebody sees me doing it, and thinks I'm a thief—"

"Well, you would be. Because if it's in his pockets, it's his money," Mart interrupted warmly.

"I would not be a thief!"

Their voices rose in furious debate. Mrs. O'Hara poured Martin tea, looked attentively about at the plates and cups. The kitchen was too hot now; presently she murmured to little Pat to go over and open the back window. A thin sweet wedge of cold fresh air came in.

"Now, here's an example," Mary Kate said, when there was a lull. "I'm secretly married to a man—nobody knows it. Well, if I go to China with him, that's no sin, is it? But anyone seeing us might think—"

"Why shouldn't you go to China with him?" Regina demanded, puzzled.

"Mother, why shouldn't a lady go somewhere—?"

"I never heard of such nonsense!" Mrs. O'Hara, displeased with the turn the conversation had taken, said impatiently. "Sin is sin, and right is right, and we are all born knowing the one from the other."

"No, but honestly," Mart said. "It's hard to think of a thing that is right, and looks wrong. Things look pretty much what they are."

Mary Kate stared at him, bright-eyed and unconvinced, and he smiled in his kindly big-brother fashion at at pretty, eager little sister.

"Well, don't you think so, Molly?" "I was just wondering."

"There's darned little," Mart said thoughtfully, "that can't be explained."

"Don't you think you—don't you think someone, might do something, Mart, something that—well, no, it wouldn't look wrong exactly, but it would be a sort of risk—"

"Nothing wrong in it, itself?"

"Oh, no!"

"No. For everyone who knew anything about it at all would know it was all right."

"Well, then—?" His shrug was infinitely heartening. Her sober face brightened.

Dinner, never a prolonged or formal occasion, was over now, and the children had moved to the dining room next to Mary Kate, and jerked it close to her, and put an arm about her, and she dropped her proud, bright head to his shoulder.

"She's awful nice, Mom," Mart said wearily.

Mrs. O'Hara slid a casual handful of piled dishes into the sink.

"Pick up your hat and coat, Tom," she said.

"Gee, I'm tired. I'm awful fond of you, Mary Kate," Mart said wearily and sleepily.

(To be continued.)

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There was a man named Smith killed around the corner a while ago."

"Take it easy. Take it easy. There are plenty of Smiths left."

Father—"One thing is certain, the man who marries my daughter will need money." Saitor—"Well, I do, sir—desperately."

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## Make Housework Easier

To remove scorch marks from silk, rub a little French chalk into the affected parts and leave till next day, when the chalk should be dusted off with a pad of soft cloth.

Eggshells should be saved for cleaning bottles and cruets. Store them in a box, and when needed crush the shells finely and partly fill the bottles with them. Add hot soapsuds and shake the bottles well. Rinse out with warm water and they will be bright and clean.

Muslin curtains should be rinsed in alum water, which does not spoil their color and renders them non-inflammable. Allow two ounces of alum to a gallon of water.

When giving children liquid medicine, place the point of the spoon against the roof of the mouth. The child cannot then eject the medicine or choke over it.

If you cover freshly-made starch with a cloth, no skin will form on it as it cools.

New stockings will last a long time without wearing into holes if they are shrunk before being worn. Wash them in warm water to which a little ammonia has been added, then wring out and dry.

A little camellia added to table salt will prevent it becoming lumpy. When making mint sauce sprinkle the mint with vinegar before chopping. The mint chops more easily, and retains its green freshness.

Dried coffee grounds, mixed with a little carbonate of soda, will remove stains from knives.

Where the color of a carpet needs freshening up, a flannel wrung in turpentine and soapsuds—a teaspoonful of turpentine to half a gallon of suds—and rubbed over the pile will bring out the colors considerably.

A squeeze of lemon-juice in cold water is an excellent mouth wash, whitening the teeth and preventing the formation of tartar.

Save the water in which potatoes have been boiled and use it for washing silver. It will make spoons and forks bright and remove stains.

A very little olive oil or vaseline rubbed into shoes that have dried stiff after getting wet will soften them again.

## For the Day

Why spoil the day with hate or greed Or any little selfish deed? Why mar the morning with a sneer Or add one mite to what is here Of bitterness and wrong and sin? Some petty little gain to win?

Why through the brilliant noontide go As one who lives in gloom and woe, And coming to the afternoon Thanks God that night must follow soon

To end the dreary cares of day And put the tools of life away?

Rather I choose to this day's end To play the comrade and the friend; To see, in spite of pain and care, The joy of living everywhere; And so to live that none shall say That I for him had spoiled the day.

Lord, through this day let me contrive To prove my right to stay alive, Let me in some way justify My place beneath this bright blue sky And happy recognition give That 'tis a privilege to live.

—Edgar A. Guest.

## The Autumn Trees

Now oak and ash in saffron stand arrayed, The sumac brims with fire, a dusky red,

The stately elm lifts up a bronze-brown head

Above the broad-leaved basswood's russet shade,

The poplar spills its silver down the glade

And the slim-fingered water-sage doth shed

An orange glow beside the river's bed,

Where slender reeds in purple twilight fade.

Solemn and grey, the ironwood looks down,

In its rock-rooted strength, upon the brown,

Broad meadow, brightly stained with cornflower blue;

But on the hills, behold, our tree of fame,

Our peerless maple, in a flowing flame

Of scarlet walks the whole wide woodland through.

—J. C. M. Duncan.



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## A Bean Hole

A bean hole, in which to bake beans can be made and operated in this way: Dig a hole in the ground three times as wide and twice as deep as your bean pot. Line it with stones on the bottom and sides. Build a fire in it and keep it burning until the hole is nearly full of glowing coals.

The day before you do this put your dry beans to soak in warm water. Not too many—they swell! Keep them in water until the next day, when the skins will crack if you blow on them. Put a layer of the beans in the pot, then a layer of fat salt pork, then a layer of sliced onions, and so on until the pot is full. Pour in a cupful of

water, two or three tablespoonfuls of molasses and a little salt.

Place a sheet of clean paper over the top, put on the cover, dig the coals out of the bean hole, put the bean pot in, cover it with the red-hot coals, put stone over the top, fill the hole with earth and pack it down. After twenty-four hours dig out the pot and give your pals a treat.

Judge—"On what grounds are you seeking a divorce from your wife?" Mr. Poe—"Misrepresentation. When I asked her to marry me she said she was agreeable."

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