

# **THE MOTORMANIACS**

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The motormaniacs by Lloyd Osbourne

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**LLOYD OSBOURNE**

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MOTORMANIACS**



# THE MOTORMANIACS

*By*

LLOYD OSBOURNE

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The Queen versus Billy, Love the  
Fiddler, and, with Robert Louis Stevenson,  
The Wrong Box, The Wrecker,  
The Ebb Tide

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APRIL

## THE MOTORMANIACS

"It's jolly to get you off by yourself," I said as we wandered away from the rest of the party.

"Then you are not afraid of an engaged girl," she observed. "Everybody else seems to be."

"I am made of sterner stuff," I said. "Besides, I am dying to know all about it."

"All about what?"

"What you found to like in Gerard Malcolm, and what Gerard Malcolm found to like in you, and what he said and what you said and what the Englishman said, and how it all happened generally."

"What you want to know would fill a book."

"You speak as if you mean it to be a sealed one."

## THE MOTORMANIACS

“ I don't see exactly what claim you have to be a reader.”

“ Well, I was the first person to love you,” I said. “ Surely that ought to count for something. It didn't last long, I know, but it was a wild business while it did. When I discovered you were just out for scalps — ”

“ And when I discovered you were the most conceited, monopolizing, jealous, troublesome and exacting man that ever lived, and that I was expected to play kitten while you did demon child — ”

“ Oh, of course, it was a mistake,” I said quickly. “ The illusion couldn't be kept up on either side. We only really got chummy after we called it off.”

“ The trouble was that we were both scalpers, and when we decided to let each other alone — in that way, I mean — we built up a pleasant professional acquaintance on the ashes of the dead fires.”

“ Can't you make it a little warmer than acquaintance?” I protested.

“ It was a real fellow feeling — whatever



### THE MOTORMANIACS

you choose to call it," she conceded. "You wanted to talk about yourself, and I wanted to talk about myself, and without any self-flattery I think I can say we found each other very responsive."

"I've rather a memory that you got the best of the bargain."

"There were hours and hours when I couldn't get a word in edgewise."

"And there were whole days and days —" I began.

"Now, don't let's work up a fuss," she said sweetly. "We won't have so many more talks together, and anyway it isn't professional etiquette for us to fight."

"Who wants to fight?" I said. "I never was that kind of Indian."

"Then let's begin where we left off."

"It used to be all Harry Clayton then," I remarked.

"Was it as long ago as that?" she asked. "Oh, dear, how time passes!"

"He joined the great majority, I heard."

"Oh, yes, he's married," she said. "He

## THE MOTORMANIACS

wasn't any good at all. What can you do with a person who has scalps to burn?"

"That kind of thing discourages an Indian," I remarked.

"It robs the thing of all its zip, but I suppose there's a Harry Clayton kind of girl, too."

"The woods are full of them."

"I am almost glad I've decided to bury the tomahawk."

"And leave me the last of the noble race?"

"You'll have to whoop alone."

"I'll often think of you in your log cabin with the white man," I said. "On winter nights I'll flatten my nose against the window-pane and have a little peek in; next day you'll recognize my footsteps in the snow."

"I'd be sure to know them by their size."

"I'm going to take ten dollars off your wedding present for that."

"It was one of our rules we could say anything we liked."

"It was a life of savage freedom. It takes one a little time to get into it again."

THE MOTORMANIACS

"You used to say things, too."

"I can't remember saying anything as horrid as that."

"Well, you couldn't, you know," she said, and put out the tip of a little slipper.

"I thought all the while it was to be Captain Cartwright — that Englishman with the eye-glass."

"I thought so, too."

"I read of the engagement in the papers, and I can not recollect that it was ever contradicted or anything."

"Oh, it wasn't," she said. "At least, not till later — lots later."

"I suppose I ought to hurriedly talk about something else," I remarked.

"You needn't feel like that at all," she returned. "The captain and I are very good friends — only he doesn't play in my yard any more."

"I can't remember Gerard Malcolm very well," I went on. "Wasn't he rather tall and thin, with a big nose and a hidden-away sister who was supposed to be an invalid?"