

Simple Cross Stitch Towels Quickly Done



Pattern 1302

You'll enjoy doing these—they go so fast! You'll enjoy owning them—they're so effective! The simple cross stitch dishes contrast so well with the dainty flowers. Any bride-to-be would be delighted with a set of these—they'd certainly make an effective Fair donation. Lose no time, for you'll want to make a number of sets. Pattern 1302 contains a transfer pattern of six motifs averaging 4 1/2 by 8 inches; illustration of all stitches needed; color suggestions; material requirements.

Send 15 cents in stamps or coins (coins preferred) for this pattern to The Sewing Circle Needlecraft Dept., 82 Eighth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Write plainly pattern number, your name and address.

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BRIGHT STAR

By Mary Schumann

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SYNOPSIS

Kezia Marsh, pretty, selfish and twenty, arrives home in Corinth from school and is met by her older brother, Hugh. He drives her to the Marsh home where her widowed mother, Fluvanna, a warm-hearted, self-sacrificing and understanding soul, welcomes her. Kezia's sister, Margery, plump and matronly with the care of three children, is at lunch with them. Hugh's wife, Dorrie, has pleaded a previous engagement. On the way back to his job at the steel plant founded by one of his forefathers, Hugh passes Doc Miller, a boyhood friend whom he no longer sees frequently because of Dorrie's antipathy. Fluvanna Marsh awakens the next morning from a dream about her late husband, Jim, whose unstable character she fears Kezia has inherited. Ellen Pendleton comes over. She is an artistically inclined girl who is a distant niece of Fluvanna's and a favorite of Hugh's. She happily tells Fluvanna she has become engaged to Jerry Purdue. Ellen fears that her father and mother, Gavin and Lizzie, will not approve the match. Hugh and Dorrie go out to the Freeland Farms to dance with their friends, Cun and Joan Whitney. Whitney, who has been out of work, announces that he has a new position. Cun and Dorrie dance together and then disappear for a while. Dancing with Joan, Hugh is amazed to find her in tears. Apparently she has some secret worry over her husband, Cun. When Ellen and Jerry speak about their engagement to Ellen's parents, Lizzie is disagreeable until Jerry sympathizes with her imagined ailments. The matter is left pending. Unexpectedly Hugh has to visit a neighboring city on business. Returning home to ask Dorrie to accompany him he finds her telephoning. In confusion she quickly hangs up without saying good-by. After hesitating about Hugh's invitation, she finally agrees to accompany him. They spend a delightful day and Hugh is happy. At a family party, Kezia encounters Jerry. Ellen is disturbed when Jerry is absorbed by Kezia. Kezia goes out of her way to charm Jerry.

CHAPTER V—Continued

"Of course, dear. Eric is polishing the car but I think he'll have it finished soon."

"Oh, he's working on it?" Margery hesitated. "Could they play around the yard if the car isn't available? . . . I hate to ask you—they were there so much last week . . ."

"Of course. Bring them on your way to Millie's."

Kezia, coming down the stairs, said, "Margery want the car? What's the matter with her own?"

"She wants to see Millie Jennings and has asked me to take the boys out."

"Do we have to have those little devils again today? The baby is better, isn't she? They were here yesterday and all last week. Margery imposes on you!"

"They can play around the yard if Eric isn't ready. It's not much to do for Margery. She's worn out, and it will be good for her to get away for a couple hours. And they're not little devils—just a couple of healthy normal boys."

"Other people are worn out too," muttered Kezia under her breath. Fluvanna smiled. "You, my dear?"

"Last night I was trying to come in quietly so I wouldn't waken you and I stumbled over a scooter in the hall. Barked my shin—look at it!"

"Last night? Kezzie, whom did you go out with last night? I don't believe you mentioned it—and I didn't recognize the car."

Kezia's face became bland and innocent. "Didn't I tell you? A crowd of us went to Emmy Markham's. Bees Snyder is as funny as a clown! You should hear him take off Lem Potter and Mrs. Lem Potter! And we had a swell supper. Went to the kitchen about twelve-thirty and cooked bacon and eggs, ate watermelon. No mail for me? . . . I think I'll go up and write some letters. I owe everyone I know."

She was disappearing up the stairs when Fluvanna said: "Was Ellen Pendleton at Emmie's?"

"No," Kezia answered, carelessly. Fluvanna thought she had heard Jerry's voice from the drive under her window when Kezia came in. She must have been mistaken. Perhaps it had been Bees Snyder. Certainly not Jerry if Ellen had not been there . . . She remembered that Kezia hadn't really told her who had called for her. Not that it mattered. It only illustrated the secrecy which was one of her traits, that fierce guarding of unimportant trifles, that resentment of being questioned or called to account—even by implication.

Kezia reminded her of her husband. Her thoughts flew away to him. He had hated questioning so. Yet he could be loquacious on occasion, expansive, humorous, wistful, flattering, a man of many moods. She remembered how well he had dressed. He wore a cut-away coat on Sunday, the silk hat and the winged collar which were the fashion of the time. His bearing had an alien elegance which spelled romance to her. Generous too. Once he gave a cripple the contents of his purse—then borrowed money from Fluvanna to pay for their dinner at the hotel. When he received change from a purchase, he always put it in his pocket without counting it.

That house on Lincoln street in which they went to housekeeping, five old-fashioned rooms and the bath downstairs . . . the big elm which drooped before the door . . . the enchantment, laughter, tears of early married life. Jim had loved horses and attended every race meet within a radius of 50 miles. Jovial sometimes when he came home—sometimes discontented. He

also liked cards. Late for dinner, late for engagements; a card game had detained him.

The memories became a moving picture screen reproducing scenes in flashes, scenes impervious to the assault of time. Friends, parties, the birth of Hugh, financial pressure, disagreements and the sweet toll of reconciliation. Jim, gay, hopeful, magnetic; Jim, morose, silent. He always dominated the picture with that positive driving force of his, perverse, ill-considered, but a power, nevertheless. She thought sadly that it was human nature to love those persons best who had a streak of perversity in their make-up. Or perhaps one is only more aware of that love—they test it so.

Several times he had been forced to borrow from her father to meet various demands, but was never able to repay the loans.

After the death of her mother and his losses in the stock market, Jim's habit of drinking increased. He did not use soft words when he drank. Some inner demon spoke in cruel, vindictive phrases. When she saw him after one of those nights when he had come in with stumbling, uncertain steps, his handsome face puffy, his hand trembling so he could scarcely hold the coffee cup, she was amazed at the conflict of love and hate which struggled in her. He reminded her of bleary old Tom Gaveny who took away the rubbish . . . But it was really Jim, her husband, to whom she was bound for life. Their three children, Margery, Hugh and Kezia were at school and might come home any time. No one must know—no one at all. Draw the blinds. Send the maid to the laundry. Telephone the office that he wasn't well. Head up; smile at friends and strangers. The banner of pride must float bravely while the craft is sinking.

And then that day. The freshly ironed shirts and children's garments lay on the bed. Put this pile in Hugh's room; sew the lace on Margery's dress; socks of varying sizes, colors must be sorted, mended; a stitch here, a button there . . .

She had never been able to put away freshly-laundered clothes since without a leaden feeling, for suddenly she looked up and saw Jim.

He was standing by the chiffonier, one elbow on it, watching her.

"Jim? You home? Have you had your lunch?"

He did not answer at once. His gaze was somber but not unkind. He sat down in a chair and motioned for her to take one.

A foreboding gripped her. She watched his hands, lean, restless, clutching the arm of the chair until they were white at the knuckles. An odd ring on his little finger—a ring which he had inherited from his father—was raised into prominence.

"I'm in a bad way, Fluvanna."

"Sick?"

He shook his head.

Her glance hardened. "Money again? I—Jim, you know—"

"Yes, I know what you're going to say. You've done a lot. Helped me out a dozen times. But this time—this time"—he struck the arm of the chair with his fist—"you must! Must, I say!"

She rose without a word, went over to the bed, gathered up some of the garments and put them in a drawer. She wouldn't . . . she wouldn't. Draining away everything she had. She had been too easy. She had to think of her children, their education, future—"I must have \$15,000."

"Fifteen thousand dollars!" The sum startled her. For what? . . . "I haven't it. You know I haven't."

His eyes swept the room, came back to her. "Sell something. Put a mortgage on the house."

"I won't. Nothing can make me."

"Won't, eh?" His lips curled in a hateful smile. "You'd rather see your husband go to the penitentiary, I suppose."

The penitentiary! His words resounded like the echo of waves, and the blood seemed to slip quietly away from her body, leaving only flesh and nerves. The penitentiary! "I don't believe you," she said faintly.

He did not reply. Then scarcely knowing what she was doing, she went into the adjoining room where Kezia slept. Kezia had left a legless doll on the floor. Mechanically she picked it up and put it into the closet.

Then Jim was in the doorway. He was holding a revolver idly in his hand. Horror froze in her. Was he going to kill himself—before her? . . . But he pointed it at her.

"Jim, you wouldn't. Don't—try to be funny," she gasped.

"I must have it before four o'clock."

She smelled the odor of whiskey. "Stop waving that revolver around! You know it's loaded."

"So it is."

She backed away from him, out into the hall. She wanted to call him a coward and a bully, but she was too terrified. There was something brooding and insane in his look.

"You say you won't?"

"I can't. How can you threaten me this way? What if the children should see you?"

"You could borrow it on your steel stock."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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