

Make Believe Bride

by Ruth Harley



EIGHTH INSTALLMENT

SYNOPSIS—Maris Trevor is discouraged because Rod O'Rourke uses all his money developing an invention which he hopes will provide an income so that they can marry. Maris thinks they should enjoy the present rather than deny themselves for the future. She becomes uncertain of her love for Rod. Perhaps there would be more happiness with someone else . . .

Now go on with the story—

"Of course you'll make good, Maris. Don't start acting silly now." Patsy spoke firmly, for Maris was verging on a hysterical state, after all her excitement. "Come, let me fix this," and keeping her interested in what she was doing, Patsy managed to get her calm again.

"There, you look swell!" exclaimed Patsy. "I can't think why Jimmy's so long in coming tonight. I did think he'd be here to see you before you left. It's too bad that Rod's still in the West."

But even as she spoke, the bell rang and a moment later Jimmy was standing awestruck, looking at Maris. "Going to beat us to it, are you?" he questioned, looking around. "I must say Rod didn't lose any time. Just saw Charley Gordon and he said Rod's gadget's going over big."

"Oh, Jimmy," laughed Maris hysterically, "I'm not a real bride tonight. I'm just going to wear this gown at the exposition—to advertise Fayson's crepe."

He turned with incredulous eyes to Pat. "What's that the girl's saying? She means she's not going to marry Rod?"

"Oh, sure she'll marry Rod when the times comes, honey, and be glad to," answered Pat. "Only it won't be tonight, for she's just a pretense bride tonight."

"Now I see a light, Patsy. Well, say, she should make a hit all right. Better not let anyone run away with you, Maris. Think Patsy and I had better come along?"

"Oh, no, there's no need for that. I know you'd rather stay at home. Gee, I bet that's my taxi! Where are the flowers?"

"They're in the ice box, Jimmy. Get them, and wrap them up in the paper that's lying on the table, so they won't drip on this magnificent cloak." Then Pat caught up the evening wrap of glistening white and silver lame and draped it about Maris' shoulders.

But when she reached the sidewalk, it was not a taxi driver, but a hired chauffeur who opened the door of the luxurious sedan which old Fayson usually rode in to his office. When he raised his eyes to hers, for a moment he looked as tho he had seen a ghost. But, remembering his place, the look of surprise was quickly followed by the impersonal glance that is the mark of the well trained servant.

As Maris leaned back against the softly upholstered cushions and glanced about her, she felt as tho she was at last in her proper setting. All sorts of luxuries were revealed in the fittings of the car, and in the vases were delicate hothouse blooms whose delicate fragrance suggested exotic loveliness.

The car drew to the curb. A man in livery hastened to open the door, and escort Maris within the hall. As she crossed the threshold, Stan stepped forward and eagerly clasped her hands.

"I'm so glad you've come. I wanted to call for you myself, but I've been in a frightful rush ever since you left."

"Well, it will soon be over," answered Maris.

"Oh, yes, and I hope we put it across. You see the old man has been rather skeptical about my idea, but I think he's beginning to see the light." Then as Mrs. Bryce approached, he added, "The other girls are in the dressing room. Mrs. Bryce will introduce you." Then with a whispered, "You look lovelier than ever," Stan hurried into the hall.

Sounds of music drifted to her thru the half-opened doorway, and as the visitors hurried back and forth, Maris felt a strange thrill of excitement sweep thru her. This was what she liked—music. Soft lights, gaily dressed women with attentive escorts, and the pleasant tingling sensation that made her feel something wonderful was going to happen.

But in a moment she was in the dressing room and Mrs. Bryce was presenting her to the other girls, and giving them all some last minute instructions. There was frank admiration in their eyes as she took her wrap off and stood revealed in the magnificent gown that was destined to usher her into a thrilling adventure.

Once in the hall, they presented a series of tableaux, but it was not till Maris appeared in the role of a wistful bride, that a sudden roar of applause brought the spectators hurrying to the Fayson salon. Time and again she was recalled. At last, as she stepped down from the platform and sauntered slowly among the crowd, she saw Stan.

"You did splendidly," he whispered, as he caught her hand. "You were the hit of the evening. I'll see you later." And squeezing her hand, he hurried away.

Then as she raised her eyes, she caught sight of the girl who had passed her in her limousine, but the once smiling eyes were now like two little daggers. Suddenly Maris felt afraid of her. But light-heartedly she turned to one of the debs who had been in the show with her.

"It's been awfully good fun," the girl said to her, smiling sweetly, "altho I can't understand why Rowene didn't come." Then glancing upwards she caught sight of Rowene's friend and darted toward her. For a moment Maris was hemmed in by the crowd, but as she struggled to move forward, the girl to whom she had just been talking exclaimed as she glanced at her spitefully, "So that's the reason Rowene didn't come. Little gold-digger," she hissed, "and we were all so nice to her, thinking poor old Rowene had had one of her frightful headaches again."

"She might well have a headache when the man she was engaged to has probably been fooling around with this stenographer for dear knows how long," retorted the other girl with a cruel glance at Maris. "She's given him up. I asked Stan the minute I got here, for I passed this girl on the way and almost mistook her for Rowene."

"Well, if that's Stan's type, Rowene'll be happier without him." Again she turned with a withering glance at Maris.

But the gleam in Maris' dark eyes was not lost on a young man nearby, who hurried toward her and tried to speak to her. However, she had had enough, and without even waiting to see Stan again, she slipped into the dressing room, got her wrap and hurried home in a taxicab.

So that was what the thought of her! Tears trembled on Maris' long dark lashes, but she would not let them fall. She would not let those girls have the satisfaction of knowing they had hurt her. And now as she stood at the door of her apartment she was glad she had held her head high when she had hurried down the stairs and reached her taxi.

Her wonderful evening had brot her nothing but disappointment. All the triumph that she felt in her reception by the spectators was poisoned by the chatter of the girls. What right had they to talk like that? How dared they hint that there was anything between Stan and her? She'd hardly spoken to him—and even if she had romantic dreams about him, certainly no one in the office had ever had occasion to link her name with his!

She caught back a sob. She would not let Patsy know of the bitter aftermath to her glorious evening. While they had been waiting to go on the improvised stage, the girls had been charming and friendly. They'd raved about her gown, too, had talked as tho Rowene had been kept away by sickness. Was that the reason Stan had given for her non-appearance?

Everything would doubtless have been lovely if only that other girl—Vi Kent—had kept her mouth shut. But Maris knew instinctively that those girls saw the line that separated a girl who worked in an office from one who was born to wealth.

Yet as she opened the door, a faint ray of hope flickered in her mind. Stan was so pleased with her work. He had said he would see her again. Perhaps if she hadn't dashed home so impetuously he might have brought her back in his car, but the thought of staying a minute longer where those girls

might point to her with scorn or hold her up to ridicule, was more than she could bear.

If only she had glanced back as the taxi sped on its way, she might have seen Stan rush frantically toward the curb; she might have realized he was sincere when he promised he would see her later.

She was glad when she entered the apartment that no one was around. Passing Patsy's room, she heard a sleepy voice cry, "How did it go, Maris?"

"Oh, great," she answered, glad that Patsy could not see her tragic face. There was no need of telling her how the girls had treated her. At least Stan was satisfied and Fayson's would likely benefit by the show.

But as she took off the gorgeous gown and the filmy undies that had made her so happy a few short hours ago, all her dreams of stepping up in society lay crumbling at her feet. Slipping on her old silk kimono and pushing her dainty feet into her shabby mules, she huddled down into a boudoir chair by the window.

Over the roofs she looked, past the tall towers with their blinking lights, up to the dark blue sky where the moon, now beginning to wane, looked like an enormous half dollar against the sky. Her throat constricted. Tears were near her eyes, and somehow as she lived over again the humiliation that the girls had showered on her, her sensitive lips quivered.

How dared they act like that; how dared they speak so about her when there wasn't a word of truth in it? If only Stan had heard, surely he wouldn't have stood for it.

The chilly air blew in and she drew her shabby bathrobe more closely about her. Maris wouldn't have believed anyone could be so mean to a stranger, especially when she was taking a part at a moment's notice. She thought of the girls she worked with. Not one of them would have been guilty of such rudeness, such lack of fine feeling. Of course Milly was a bit of a vamp and didn't hesitate to take every chance of making a hit with the men, but never as long as Maris had known her had she done anything so contemptible as had those girls whose parents' names illuminated the pages of the Social Register. Perhaps, tho, they weren't all like that.

Somehow, she had always envisioned the daughters of the four hundred plus as lovely girls, whose manners and general conduct were something superior to the girls she worked with. Milly had told her that was all baloney, that they were a hard set; but, as she studied their pictures in the papers, she was sure Milly knew nothing about what she was discussing.

But now Maris' soft lips curved in a smile of derision. "I bet Milly's right!" she thought.

Soon Maris opened her windows wider and slipped into bed. But she could not sleep. From one side to another she tossed, then turned over her pillow; but still sleep would not come. Her brain was working with tireless activity.

"Gee, if I don't get to sleep soon I'll be hearing the milkman," she murmured to herself. "This will never do, I must try and forget those vicious society buds. I can't afford to let their gall keep me from sleeping."

Then, suddenly, as tho a hand had pulled back a curtain in her memory, she saw as plainly as tho she were there, the dark Ramapo Hills and the wide waters of Greenwood Lake. A year ago Rod had taken her to spend the day there. It had been a crisp autumn morning when they reached the lake and as they got in the rowboat he'd engaged, she was glad she'd worn a coat. But as the day advanced it was once more like summer and when they landed on the shore to eat their lunch, there was no need of any extra wraps.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)

HOW, WHAT and WHY?

The Andover News has arranged with the Office of Information of the New York State Colleges of Agriculture and Home Economics to answer questions about problems of farm and home. If you enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope and mention the name of this paper, you will receive a direct reply from the colleges. Do not ask more than one question in one letter or on one post card. Ask as many questions as you like, but make each one a separate communication.

Cherries in 1937

A fruit grower inquires about the outlook for cherries in 1937. The answer: "Cherry prices fell greatly during the depression, but have been slowly recovering as consumers' purchasing power has improved."

"The long-time outlook is for a gradual improvement in prices as this trend continues, but with little prospect of a return to pre-depression prices. Prices in 1937 should reflect the short crop of 1936, which, together with good demand, has allowed old stocks of canned and cold-pack cherries to be cleaned up."

"Production of cherries in both the sour-cherry and sweet-cherry states has been rising and will probably rise somewhat further."

Cost of Milk

A dairyman asks if any studies have been made of the cost of producing milk, and if this cost varies during different seasons.

The answer, from Dr. L. C. Cunningham of the department of agricultural economics: "From a study of 437 dairy farms in four representative sections of New York, it was learned that the cost of producing milk varies from month to month."

"Based on yearly average costs, January and February are the two months when costs are highest; June and July, the months when they are lowest. During fall months, the cost builds up toward a winter high. During spring months it tends to taper toward a summer low. At the same time the farm price of milk does not change correspondingly."

"If the yearly average cost is taken as 100 per cent, the highest producing cost is represented by 128

and the lowest by 54, whereas the farm price of milk is represented by a high of 115 and a low of 84."

Poultry Lights

A poultryman inquires about the use of lights in the poultry house; whether they can be discontinued if once started in the fall; and if morning-or-evening-lights are best.

Professor L. M. Hurd of the poultry department replies: "One thing to remember about using lights: once it is started in the fall, it must be continued regularly until about April 1. This rule has no exceptions. All-night light as well as other methods of lighting must be discontinued slowly when spring comes."

"Lights can be used in the morning, or in the evening, or both. All ways work well, but morning light is a little the best. Provide light during 12 to 14 hours each day. Some poultrymen prefer to have light all night."

Agrigraphs

A Leghorn hen in Japan is credited with a world record in egg-laying. According to reports this hen allowed herself only four holidays and shelled out 361 eggs in 365 days.

Studies on the vitamin-G requirement of poultry are summarized in Cornell bulletin P-660. Single copies may be had free on request from the New York State College of Agriculture at Ithaca, N. Y.

A comparison of 1936 crop production in New York State with the past five year average shows decreases for the following crops, in order of shortage: Apples, grapes, cabbage, cherries, peaches, buckwheat, dry beans, tobacco, barley, pears, potatoes, oats, celery, hay, rye, canning tomatoes and corn.

Two cities in the United States now adjust salaries of men teachers when they marry, and one of these cities gives further increases when children come.

Deposits of iron ore in Brazil exceed those of the entire United States, according to the Geologic Service in Rio de Janeiro.

In this country there are over 88,300,000 miles of telephone wires, 2,300,900 miles of telegraph and cable and 300,000 miles of power lines in use.

The Family DOCTOR

IN THE PHARMACY OF THE ALL-WISE CREATOR

Perhaps very few people who have ever think of the valuable medicinal properties residing in the fancy pepper shaker, that long ago earned its right to a place on every dining-table. Some shrink from pepper, advisedly perhaps—and from the smarting it causes when indulged in too freely. Others, lovers of the pungent in dietary, go to extremes and indulge the fiery pepper to excess. There will always be extremists who go too far.

"Piper Nigrum," black pepper, depends upon an essential oil for its stimulating property. There are some modern medical authors who have little faith in internal antiseptics. One in particular tells us that an infectious, catarrhal process set up on a mucous surface, can be cured by the use of an agent that stimulates the surface cells to activity. He means that the cells do the work against the germs, and not the so-called "antiseptic" remedies.

Black pepper certainly stimulates mucous surfaces. It causes a free flow of gastric and intestinal secretions. And these are needed in abundance for perfect digestion. Moderate use of black pepper benefits the weak stomach—does away with "gases" that give distress. It does no harm if used temperately, except in ulceration.

One of the best anti-malarials I know of contains a small proportion of the oil of black pepper. "Piperazin" has value in certain affections with uric acid intoxication. The use of pepper is well known in convalescence from chronic alcoholism, coaxing the weakened gastric surfaces back into normal activity.

The pharmacy of a great and all-wise Creator is without parallel for its number of useful remedies. Ever think of it?

Some Advantages

Jail Visitor — "Isn't prison life pretty hard?"

Convict — "Naw, it ain't so bad. The warden never drags me out to bridge parties or to the movies in the evening."

Give Magazines This Christmas

"The All Year Round Gift"

Nothing makes a happier holiday or anniversary present than a subscription for a good magazine. The great variety enables you to select one to meet the exact taste of the recipient, and it will constitute a repeated reminder of the donor thruout the year. In no other way can you make the purchase price go so far.

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