

Masked Longing

Chapter 13
MADAME MASQUE

As the liner Colossus was warped to its dock, Allen appeared on deck with Channing, wearing her new mask. They had boarded the ship in the lower harbor.

There was no one else on the ramp plank as the two descended. Allen was wrapped in a long fur coat, but she turned up collar did not hide the new mask.

"Pine the dame with the Japanese map!" one automobile reporter exclaimed. A fusillade of cameras began shooting at Allen. She and Channing were surrounded as they stepped on the pier. The reporters knew Channing, and pleaded with him for a clue to the masked lady's identity.

"Really, I'm sorry," he shook his head. "I can't say a word."

There was no one else on the gang now men snatched.

Arrived at the Ambassador, Allen and Channing made their escape upstairs. Jimmy lingered below in the lobby, trying to seem unobtrusive as the reporters who had trailed Allen's taxi hurried in. Knowing Jimmy, they all pounced upon him.

"What's up?" he inquired.

They confessed their troubles briefly. Jimmy registered surprise, then a light seemed to dawn upon him suddenly.

"Say, maybe I can help you after all," he said. "I remember now I did hear something about the Mademoiselle Masque. Call up the United Broadcasting company and ask for Mr. Sherwood—but don't say I told you."

The reporters made a dash for the telephone desk and Jimmy slipped upstairs.

"Your public relations counsel," he announced with a swagger as he entered Allen's impressive suite. "I've started the little ball rolling. Nothing to do now but wait for the papers to come out!"

Max Klein arrived later, bringing the evening papers.

"What name is she going to use?" he asked.

"Mademoiselle Masque," Channing said. "Nothing more."

"That's all idea," admitted Klein. "But it'll get out sometime."

"I doubt it," Channing said. "Sherwood's the only outsider who knows the truth and Sherwood isn't going to tell the story for the program."

"Emile Gluck?" Klein was chuckling. "If that boy don't find out I'm a Chinaman! When he pays for publicity, he wants his money's worth. By the way, what about that telegram? Have you two heard any more?"

"Not a thing," said Jimmy.

"Well, I'll bet you do. What's her name? Adeline?—won't miss a chance like this. No. If I know the dame!"

"Not if you—what?" Jimmy exclaimed. "You mean you've found out who she is?"

"Well, maybe I know what I know," said Klein. "Then again, maybe I don't. You pick around old Papa Klein, and you might find out something."

Klein's prophecy that another telegram might arrive annoyed Jimmy. If one came he resolved to open it and say nothing to Allen about it. But there was no wire and Klein had gone without elucidating. Whatever he had in the back of his mind, the producer proposed to keep there.

Allen herself was keyed-up like a child. She was standing in her black velvet gown. As a final precaution, Allen made sure that the porcelain mask was properly adjusted. The smile on its features challenged the whole world to guess who she might be. More visitors were announced.

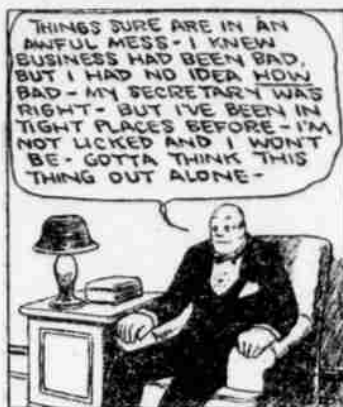
Emile Gluck—short, fat and pompous—gaped as though he had seen a vision and did not believe it.

"Mademoiselle Masque, gentlemen!" Channing greeted them. Colonel Sherwood nodded her fingers. Gluck bowed with a heavy courtesy and the starchy air of his mustache tickled Allen's cheek.

"So you are going to sing for us?" he beamed. "And you come from Paris—a mystery—just like my Pa-

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

By Harold Gray



REG'AR FELLERS

The Shell Game

By Gene Byrnes



TAILSPIN TOMMY

Fate Is Against Eda!

By Glenn Chaffin
and Hal Forrest



DUMB DORA

Time To Excavate!

By Paul Fung



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



MUTT AND JEFF

Life Is Not So Ducky With Jake

By Bud Fisher



ACROSS

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