

READY MADE WIFE

BY CORALIE STANTON

SYNOPSIS: Because she and her sister Gladys faced starvation and worse in Australia, Lauris Moore permits a mistake to continue—the pretense to be the widow of Rex Moore, the famous actor in London for Mark Albery, Rex's employer, and attracts his favorable attention. But Rex was not lost in the Pacific when he was shot. He was blinded, and returns after two years. His slight recovery. Now he tells Lauris she must continue the deception to preserve his job with Albery.

Chapter Eight
BAD BARGAIN

"FROM our meeting last week, you're most certainly not the kind of girl I'd pick out for a wife," said Moore.

"Then, why do you say I must go on pretending to be?" she asked.

"I tried to make it clear, but you don't seem very quick on the uptake. Rather surprising, seeing that you must be brainy enough to have fooled all these people. Just try to get it this time. I let Albery think I had a wife, that you were my wife. I didn't tell him you must be an impostor."

"But you can tell him now."

"He'd never forgive me. He can't stand being fooled. He thinks a whole heap of himself under that quiet, silky way of his. As I've just remarked, I'm broke to the wide, and he has my future in his hand."

"But he'd only blame me," she insisted. "It's I who have fooled him. It's I who'd get the sack."

"That wouldn't help me. Don't argue! You'll have to do what I say. I didn't know how right I was the other day when I said you were probably taking a man's job. And I'm damned if I'm going to let you take mine."

"You're unfair, you're hateful!" There was a sob of rage in her voice. He was so deliberately insulting, so determined to hurt, so bitter in his obvious contempt for her as an unscrupulous adventuress. "What do you mean by taking my job?"

"If you don't go on pretending to be my wife, you will take my job from me. Gosh, how hard it is to get anything into your head! Must I say it all over again? I'm supposed to be dead. I come back. I lie to Albery from the beginning."

"I let him think I have a wife. He gives me her address. I say I am going to see her at once. He thinks a great deal of her. He congratulates me. He praises her work, her pluck. He tells me that I am to go back to my job, that he will be behind me, as he was before. But, he says, we can talk about that later on. He is full of sympathy. I leave him to go to my wife. The scene is all set."

"What would he think if I went back and told him I never had a wife, but simply wanted to see the girl who had played such a trick on us both? He'd never forgive me. He'd think I was either mad, or I wanted to make him look a fool. I know him. It would finish me with him."

LAURIE had listened in stony silence.

"You say the scene is set. Mr. Moore," she said coldly. "It is set for you."

"For you, too," he retorted. "It would finish you with Albery as well."

"I could get other work, I dare say."

"As you said just now, everybody would know that you were a cheat and a fraud."

"I'll risk that." She was quivering with defiance.

"I don't know that I couldn't prosecute you and have you sent to prison."

"I'd risk that, too!"

"His voice changed. It was just as abrupt, but less dictatorial.

"Look here, I didn't mean that, of course. If you're such a good worker as Albery says, you must be business-like. Don't you think you owe me something? Haven't you benefited quite a bit by passing as my widow?"

"I have," she admitted, and again the warm color flooded her pale cheeks with shame.

"You said something about it saving your sister's life." He spoke quite gently, for him.

"It did."

"Well, then, whether you like it or not, don't you think you owe it to me to go on with the farce, so that I can get on with my job?"

She was silent for a few moments, looking at him with undisguised antagonism.

"Are you sure it depends on me?"

"Definitely. I know Albery."

Unwillingly, she was forced to agree with him.

"How long would we have to keep it up?" she asked slowly.

"So you admit my claim on your gratitude? That's something." The mocking smile came into his eyes, and she stared back at him, and from the friction of that glance flew sparks of very positive interest. "I suppose it depends on what happens how long we have to keep it up. We can, no doubt, quarrel, and find we are not suited, and part. There's enough of that going on now to make it noticeable. After two years' separation, you know."

"How she hated him, his bitterness, his cynicism!"

"You dislike women so much that you won't want it to be long," she said.

"I don't suppose I shall get in your way much," he answered. "All going well, I shall be mostly in the air. Well, thanks. It's a bargain, then. I'll see Albery tomorrow, and we can settle things. I'll say good-night now."

"Good-night!"

HE TURNED in at the door.

"You said in the train that you never wanted to meet me again."

"I haven't changed my mind."

"You must admit it looks like fate, as if we had to meet here."

"There are different kinds of fate."

"And you hate this particular kind?"

"I do."

He gave her one of his intent, penetrating looks.

"You haven't told me all the truth," he said. "I feel sure of that."

"About what?"

"Why you did it. What drove you to it. Won't you tell me now? There was an appeal in his voice, but Lauris was too angry to heed it.

She threw up her head.

"I have told you all."

"His voice hardened.

"Then," he said brutally, "you are like most women. You get what you can, how you can, and when the time comes to pay, you don't like it—and you squeal!"

With that he went out of the room. Lauris heard his firm, light tread down the rickety stairs. She heard the front door bang. The old house was not made for him. He looked so big in it. There was something untamed, free about him. You felt that his home was in the air.

She went into her bedroom. Angry tears gushed from her eyes.

She opened a drawer and took out a box of Australian eucalyptus wood, unlocked it, and fumbled among a lot of papers. But she could hardly see for her tears.

No, she wouldn't tell him the truth. Wild horses wouldn't drag it out of her. She hated him too much. She could not expose to him the agony of those days in Sydney when her lovely little sister, a child for her years, had disappeared from their lodgings, and she had searched for her distractedly for days, and found at last that she had been kidnapped by a gang associated with their landlady.

That, if Lauris had not by a miracle been in time, she would have been shipped off to some unknown destination and swallowed up in the night of a distant underworld, lost to her for ever.

That it was to cover their attempted crime that her landlady had accused her of theft. That she had been literally out of her mind when Glad went down with pneumonia, caught in some slum hotel where her kidnappers had hidden her, and nearly died. That when deliverance came, angel-wise, in the person of Mark Albery's friend, she had snatched at it—whatever the cost.

No, she could not tell him these things. He would not understand. He was cruel; he only cared for himself and his career. Let him think what he liked of her!

She found what she was looking for, a photograph of Rex Moore that she had cut out of a newspaper.

The Rex Moore of more than two years ago. It was a good likeness, as newspaper photographs go, but she would never have known him from it. Not only had he a moustache, and looked much younger, but the expression was quite different. It was an eager, happy face, although the rugged strength was there; and the eyes were laughing and kind.

How he must have suffered to become this harsh, embittered man!

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Driven by Ellis, had just passed the Shannon car and hit the Shannon car in the side. Ellis told the police that he did not see the Shannon car. Due to the illness of City Police Judge Allen D. Curry, a hearing set for Friday at which Ellis was to appear on charges of "hazard at an intersection" was postponed indefinitely.

DELAY QUIZ AUTO CROSSING SMASH

Miss Frances Porter, 17, who was taken to the Sacred Heart hospital Thursday evening suffering from shock received when the auto in which she was riding was in a collision with one driven by C. W. Ellis of Medford at the corner of Central avenue and Twelfth street, was resting easy last night. She will return to her home at the Holloway orchards today, according to hospital attendants.

The accident occurred when the car in which Miss Porter was riding, driven by Betty Shannon, an Albuquerque, N. M., girl visiting friends in Medford, was returning from Astoria. Miss Shannon was in the act of turning left from Central onto Twelfth street, with two autos approaching from the opposite direction.

One car was driven by Ben Nilsson of Astoria and was slowing down near the curb to allow the Shannon car to turn. The other machine,

CHIEF BLAME FOR FIRES ON SMOKERS

PORTLAND, Ore., July 13.—(AP)—Careless smokers were blamed for 16 of the 39 fires reported in national forests of Oregon and Washington for the ten-day period ending July 10. Lightning caused 12 fires, campers 5, debris burners 4, lumbering operations 1 and the origin of one was undetermined.

The forestry service revealed that smokers and campers have been responsible for 111 of the total of 205 fires in the national forests so far this season.

MEDFORD DELEGATES RETURN FROM STATE CONFAB AT NEWPORT

The Medford delegates and drum corps of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Grater Lake Post No. 1533, and Auxiliary have returned to Medford after attending the state encampment at Newport.

Commander Etha W. Wall of Grater Lake post, and I. D. Canfield, O. E. Hukill and W. W. Coe, delegates, represented the local post. Canfield, past commander of Grater Lake post, was appointed commander of the state department.

The encampment was the largest ever held by the V. F. W. in Oregon. Commander-in-Chief VanZandt gave an interesting review of legislative affairs, and predicted that the bonus bill would come up in a modified form during the coming session of congress. He stressed the fact that until all four major veteran organizations got together, they cannot expect to obtain their objectives, protection and furtherance of veteran rights.

State department commander, Joe Chamberlain, of the American Legion was present and gave a splendid talk as also did the state commander of Washington V. F. W.

Tuesday afternoon the big parade was staged. All the little princesses, candidates for the honor of queen of the encampment, were there. Portland Post, composed entirely of policemen, Pendleton "Let 'er Buck" post, with Indian entertainers, including Chief White Feather, the

COAST BUSINESS AHEAD LAST YEAR

SAN FRANCISCO—Business in the 12th reserve district is reported considerably ahead of this time last year. Bank deposits the first 10 days of July were 38 per cent ahead of 1934, including corporate refinancing. Citrus fruit prices have advanced and shipments are reported increasing. Tourist trade is lively. Pacific coast stock markets have advanced further.

LONGSHORE CHIEF BRANDS BRIDGES COMMUNIST TOOL

NEW YORK, July 13.—(AP)—Open warfare flared up again today between Joseph P. Ryan, president of the International Longshoremen's association, and Harry Bridges, west coast leader, with Ryan calling Bridges a communist and Bridges retorting: "It's a frame-up—a lot of deliberate lies."

Bridges is just a tool to bore from within and the communists are using him," Ryan told the last session of the longshoremen's convention.

He expressed the hope that Bridges, who "had the temerity to attack Mr. Green (William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor) would not be a member of the association for long."

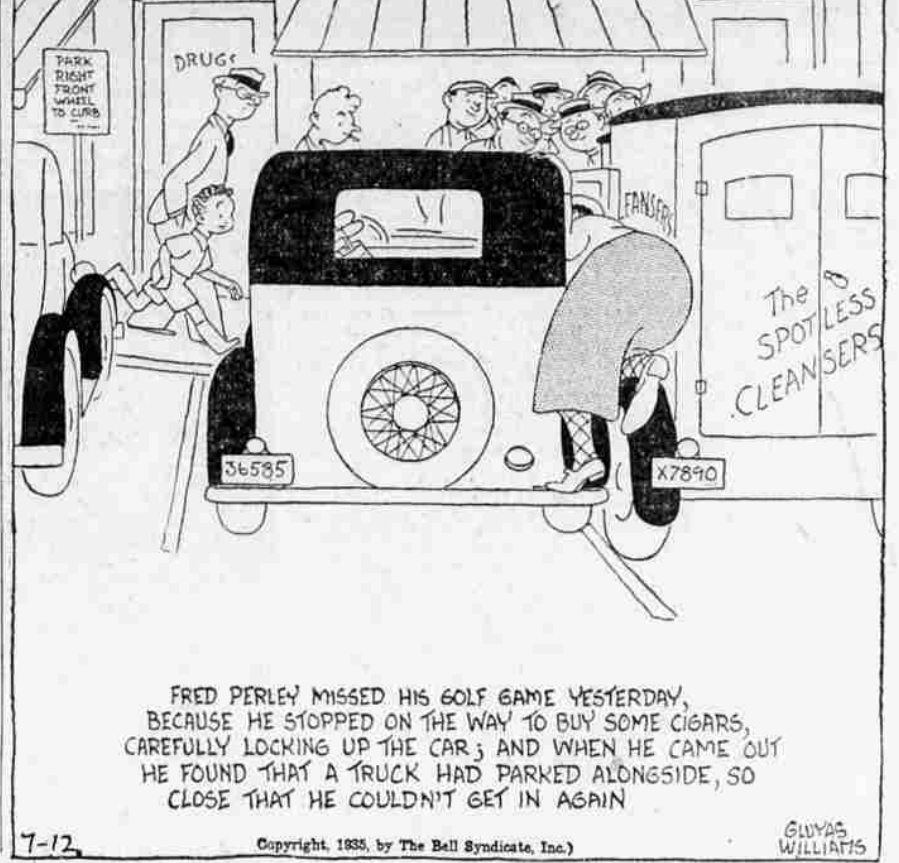
"I don't know whether Bridges is a citizen or not," Ryan continued. "With all due regard for the west coast delegates, I want to say that they are to an extent discredited because they have a man with them from the communist party."

Ryan said he received an anonymous report from the west coast dealing with communist activities which frequently mentioned Bridges' name.

Death Ends Driver's Fost.

SUNBURY, Pa.—(UP)—For several weeks 16-year-old James Youm practiced driving an automobile. On the day before he was to take the test for a driver's license, he wrecked an automobile and was fatally injured.

SUBURBAN HEIGHTS



FRED PERLEY MISSED HIS GOLF GAME YESTERDAY, BECAUSE HE STOPPED ON THE WAY TO BUY SOME CIGARS, CAREFULLY LOCKING UP THE CAR, AND WHEN HE CAME OUT HE FOUND THAT A TRUCK HAD PARKED ALONGSIDE, SO CLOSE THAT HE COULDN'T GET IN AGAIN.

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S-MATTER POP—



TAILSPIN TOMMY—On "Even Grounds!"



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—The Stranger



THE NEBBS—Nix



THE BUNGLE FAMILY—Oh Peggy!



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