

READY MADE WIFE

BY CORALIE STANTON

SYNOPSIS: Larrie Moore has narrowed the name of a man she thought dead. Now that Rex Moore has returned, she must keep up the pretense of being married to him as he may hold the job with Mark Albany for whom she does work. Rex is in their fat when a woman is announced, like Wanda Steele, and she seems to recall disturbing memories to Rex.

Chapter 13 PAST HISTORY

"REX, how badly you treated me!" Wanda Steele's great dark eyes reproached him through the happiness of seeing him again. "How could you do it? Going off like that without a word! Leaving me in that fearful anxiety, not knowing whether you were alive or dead! After all I had done for you! It was cruel—it was inhuman. I never got over it. Nothing mattered to me any more after you had gone. Eight months ago, Rex, and I thought of you every day!"

"How did you find me?" he asked in a dull voice.

"I've just come to London from Italy. I've been traveling for the last six months. And I saw in the paper this morning that Mark Albany had given you a luncheon, that you were back and were planning a new flight. I gave you the Albany address, and they gave me your address. Rex, why do you look at me so strangely? Aren't you glad to see me? Have you forgotten everything?"

He was looking at her strangely, at the woman who, with her husband, had rescued him in their yacht when he had crashed in those lonely wastes of the Pacific, who had taken him to their home in California, looked after him, nursed him devotedly while he lay unconscious, comforted him when he awoke blind.

They had done for him all that human beings could do. They had kept his reason a secret, as he had asked them to. They had treated him as an honored guest; they had indulged every reasonable whim of his broken body and his darkened soul. They had lapped him in the greatest luxury and paid enormous sums to the greatest specialists in the hope of restoring his sight.

At last he had been cured, and only a month afterwards he had slipped out of their gates during the night, because he knew they would not let him go in the way he wanted to, and because he knew he could never thank them for what they had done.

And because this woman had told him that she loved him and that without him her life would not be worth living. Of course, he realized afterwards that he had been a little crazy. His brain must have been unhinged by the joy of regaining his sight. "I can only think you must have been mad," the woman said. "I was," he answered. "What I did was unforgivable. There is nothing worse than ingratitude."

"It doesn't matter now that I've found you again," she said. She was holding his hands, standing very close to him, looking passionately, exultantly into his eyes.

She was not beautiful. Her features were too large. But she was attractive, with her eager, wide red lips, her long pale golden face, powdered with freckles, framed in the thick platinum hair, with thickly painted lashes.

And she was supremely elegant. Her severe tailor-made costume, her little grey turban, with a single large pearl in it, her discreet but costly onyx and diamond hangings, the grey moiré pochette, with the tiny diamond initials; all was perfect. The impeccable combination of wealth and taste.

Rex Moore's face was grim, as he disengaged his hands and put her gently into an armchair.

Her eyes filled with reproach again. "Rex, I hardly knew you! Tell me about it. What did you do it for? Why did you never send word?"

"I know that I could never thank you," he answered. "And I couldn't go on living on your kindness and your husband's generosity. I'm afraid I can't find words to explain. But I had to get on my own feet again. I went to New York. It took me two months to work my way there. And I picked up a living in one way and another. And then I suppose my mind got well again, like my body had done, and I wanted

to come back to England and get on with my job. That's all."

"ALL!" she echoed. "It tells me nothing." But she did not seem to mind, or to be particularly interested in what he had done during those months. It was so plain that all she cared about was that she had found him again.

"How is your husband?" he asked.

"Dead."

"Oh, I am sorry!"

"You needn't be. I'm not."

He looked at her with something like fear in his eyes.

"Don't be a hypocrite," she said. "You know quite well Ferdy and I were nothing to each other. For years we had been only good friends—long before you came into my life. Ferdy had his compensations, like all men. I had none. I wasn't that

kind. I couldn't take up with just any man, because he was a man."

"I am sorry," Rex Moore repeated. His long, angry mouth was hard. In his face was nothing that she looked for.

"Sorry because I am free?" the woman asked. Her voice had dropped; there was no drawl in it, but a breathless question.

Rex looked at her with his wintry eyes.

"I should have liked to thank him," he said dully.

"You have forgotten me? You have never thought of me at all?"

"Often."

"Don't play with me! You know what we said to each other before you ran away like a coward. I understand, Rex, you ran away because of me. You were afraid of me. You didn't want to be ungrateful to Ferdy. You knew I loved you—you knew it. You must have known it all the time you were with us. But Ferdy was alive. Now he's dead there's nothing between us."

"When did he die?"

"Two months after you left us. He fell off his horse and it rolled over him. I think he was drunk. But, Rex, let's talk about ourselves. You've had a shock. But you must see there's nothing between us now."

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Wanda, tomorrow, gets a shock.



What I did was unforgivable.

STATE EXPENSES CAREFULLY EYED BY BUDGET CHIEF

SALEM, Ore. (UP)—War on childers of state expense accounts has been declared by budget director D. O. Hood.

Budgetary control, vested in Governor Martin by the last legislature, is being used effectively, Hood revealed. Every voucher is being checked by the budget office before being paid.

Already a number have been turned back because they were believed to be too high.

The battleship Oregon commission was called on the carpet by the governor, charged with trying to spend more than its legislative appropriation. The budgetary control law gives the governor power to "rearrange, transfer, disapprove or revise" items of expenditure. Martin proposed to cut the commission's expenses for the rest of the year in half.

Formerly, all vouchers were checked by the governor's private secretary. The checking was merely a routine signing of the warrants, Hood said.

Martin transferred the work to the budget division, where Carl Cover, assistant budget director, studies each voucher before signing it and passing it on to Secretary of State Snell for payment.

Two employees who went to Salt Lake City and charged the state \$140 each for the trip by automobile,

were told to cut the item to around \$30 each, the railroad round-trip fare. They did. Hereafter, the budget office has decreed, railroad rates will be the maximum for travel vouchers.

Hotel and meal expenses are watched closely. Expense accounts of secretaries of state boards and commissions have been pared.

Some vouchers have been sent back several times and not approved until the expense items have been cut considerably, the budget office revealed.

WASHINGTON, July 18.—(AP)—President Roosevelt today nominated John M. Hall, of this city, chief inspector of locomotive boilers in the interstate commerce commission and John Brodie Brown, of Oregon, assistant chief.

Grade A Students Gain. BOULDER, Colo.—(UP)—Forty students of the University of Colorado made a straight "A" average during the winter quarter as compared with 36 for the fall quarter, according to figures released by the university.

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SALES TAX TOKEN BECOME POPULAR

SALEM, Ore.—(UP)—Sales tax tokens—Washington's contribution to the sales tax system—may become standard equipment throughout the country, according to advice received here from the Olympia office of Tax Commissioner T. M. Jenner.

The Washington token has been copied by Mississippi, Oklahoma, Colorado and Illinois, and state governments continually request information on the Washington plan.

Jenner predicted that if the sales tax should become accepted for the whole nation, the United States would issue fractional one-cent notes to replace the tokens. Other nations, Jenner pointed out, have legal coins for smaller denominations than our pennies.

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BODY OF WOMAN FOUND IN SEWER

CHICAGO, July 19.—(AP)—The discovery of a woman's body in a Chicago sewer gave an exciting turn today to the hunt for Mrs. Evelyn Smith, 35, sought in the "swamp murder" of Erva Lang, 28.

Investigators rushed to 7th street, the scene of the discovery, in the belief the body was that of Mrs. Smith, but later decided it was that of another woman. The woman had been dead for three months, the investigators said.

Mrs. Smith disappeared after Mrs. Blanche Dunkel, Lang's mother-in-law, told police she hired Mrs. Smith to stay long for \$500.

A group of workmen repairing the sewer found the body, which was wrapped in linen. It was in such a condition the investigators said, it would be difficult to establish any identification and were unable to say immediately whether there had been foul play. The woman's hands had been tied.

FISH-EATING BIRDS GET FEW GAME FISH

SALEM, Ore.—(UP)—Fish-eating birds—usually blamed for the disappearance of baby trout planted in streams—actually destroy very few game fish, according to a report from the federal biological survey.

Sticklebacks, sculpins, suckers, sunfish, catfish and large trout wolf up the fingerlings that are used every year to stock fishing streams. Other enemies of the young fish are water snakes, salamanders, crawfish, leeches and large insects.

The survey said that great blue herons, for example, eat mostly the so-called coarse fish, insects and field mice. Under natural conditions biologists believe, the fish-eating birds do more good than harm, as they destroy many enemies of the game fish.

Sam Parks, Jr., new national open champion, jots down notes each evening when he is in a tournament, describing flight variations of the ball from different lies and under varying weather conditions.