

READY MADE WIFE

BY CORALIE STANTON

SYNOPSIS: Rex Moore, the air-minded, returns from a dizzying flight over Africa to find that Laurie, the girl who is pretending to be his wife in order to secure his job with Mark Albery, is having dinner with Albery himself. Laurie is also employed by Albery. Gladys, Laurie's sister, is meeting Rex for the first time, and is appropriately thrilled. She does not know his marriage is a pretense.

Chapter 23

MRS. STEELE AGAIN

Gladys giggled. She was stirred in her facile emotion. What a funny girl Laurie was! Fancy having been married to this man before he left Australia, and never having talked about him at all. Why, he was the most alive thing she had ever come across! She had his most curious feeling herself. It was like being in a room with a bomb and never knowing when it was going off.

The telephone rang. Moore had a moment of curious panic for a hero. He signed to Gladys.

"Answer it, please! If it's a newspaper man, say I'm not here—and leave the receiver off!"

"Hello!" said Gladys's light and clear but very ordinary voice. "Mr. Rex Moore? I'll see!"

"It's a lady," she said, putting down the receiver. "Mrs. Steele."

Rex went to the telephone with a heave of his shoulders.

"Rex—it's you! Oh, what a relief!" Wanda Steele's high-pitched voice, with the little drawl, and at the moment a throb of emotion. "I've just seen on the tape-machine in the hotel that you're back. I had to ring up. I wanted to be the first one of your friends to greet you, and to say you here!"

"Please, cut that out!" Moore gave a shamed laugh. "I'm feeling blue because I had to leave my comrade over in France. He did just as much as I did. He's a splendid fellow."

"You're much too modest. How proud your wife must be of you! Do give her my love."

"I will when I see her. She's out to dinner with a friend. You see, I came back unexpectedly."

"Oh, then, you're alone! I suppose you wouldn't come round here, just to have a little chat? It would be such a pleasure."

Why had he said that? He was furious with himself. And yet he found himself accepting Mrs. Steele's invitation, the last thing he had intended to do.

"Thank you very much, I should like to come for a few minutes. We must have seemed very rude the way we put off our dinner the other day."

He turned to Gladys. It was a relief to get out of the flat. He felt inexplicably shy of this lovely girl, with her great blue-gray eyes that looked at you so queerly, as if she could see right through you. From the first he didn't find her sympathetic. He had an idea that she could be very nasty if she chose. He could not imagine her being Laurie's sister.

"If Laurie comes in before I get back, please tell her that I've gone round to call on Mrs. Steele at Claridge's Hotel," he said.

Gladys gave her little giggling laugh.

"You're one of the boys, aren't you? You don't lose much time."

The interview with Wanda Steele was bound to be embarrassing. When he reached the hotel Moore almost turned back. But he had better get it over. This woman must always have a call on him. He must always feel a worm in her presence. She looked radiant, all in soft grey, her eager red lips parted in a smile of welcome, her dark eyes devouring his face.

But almost at once she began to reproach him.

"Rex, how could you have sent me money? Crude bank notes—a thousand pounds! It broke my heart. Do you think you could really repay me like that? And with such cold, business-like words? I felt I could never see you again. But when I heard you were back tonight, I was too glad—I couldn't help myself."

She was not actually crying, but she held her lace handkerchief to her eyes.

"Wanda, you must try to understand," he said firmly. "I should lose all my self-respect if I did not repay you what I can. Your care and kindness—that is impossible. But the

money you spent on me—that I can do. Please don't make me say it again, but if I do not repay it, I am only a beggar and waster who took pity on you. It's not fair to me. I don't suppose that was nearly enough. You must look on it as a first installment. You must have spent a fortune on me."

Rex Moore did not know women, or he would not have said these things that made Wanda Steele hate him almost as much as she loved him.

"I don't feel I can discuss it with you," she answered, with a kind of magisterial sorrow. "I haven't the slightest idea how much money you spent. We didn't think of money neither Rex nor I. I gave the money you sent the other day to a hospital. If you insist on sending more, I shall do the same."

"You are unkind and unfair," he said angrily. "No woman is ever just."

She laughed miserably.

"Is a man ever truthful? How could you have kept me in the dark about your marriage—all the time you were with us in California? How unkind—never to mention that you had a wife! And she must have thought you were dead all the time!"

Rex Moore took fright.

"I behaved shamefully, I know," he said. "I don't suppose I didn't remember anything about my life. And afterwards—you know how I felt my blindness. I only wanted to be dead to the world."

"You must be utterly heartless," she said somberly. "I suppose that's why you have such a hold over women, that's why you're still everything in the world to me."

"You will not understand," he said in a frustrated, discouraged voice.

"I WILL understand, Rex!" Her face changed from sorrow to a smile of radiant tenderness. She drew nearer to him on the wide couch, her long, pale golden face alight with attraction, her deep dark eyes caressing him. She was a clever woman, as he would never be a clever man. She was determined to get her way in the end. She knew how to hide her passion and to show him the sympathetic affection that she might show a brother or a friend.

"My dear, I am too fond of you to let you go out of my life. You mean too much to me. I want only to forget the past. All that you said to me I will put out of my mind and as the madness of a sick man. But I want to be your friend and your wife's friend, too. I want you to let me into your lives just a little. I want to help you if I can. So tell me that you will forget the past, Rex, as I shall do."

He was touched.

"You are generous," he admitted in a difficult voice. "But you are wrong about forgetting the past. I can never forget what you did for me."

He was thinking, miserably, but in a valiant effort to do the right thing—"After all, I owe this woman my eyesight and my life. She has done nothing against me, only for me. It's not her fault that I'm landed in this stupid mess. She can't understand that if I don't repay her the money she spent on me, I shall be less than a man. If she wants my friendship, she must have it. Things will be easier when Laurie and I don't have to keep up this game any longer. I shan't have to be acting every minute of my life."

Wanda rallied him on his introduction, and made him tell her details of his recent trip into the heart of Africa. Her eyes flattered him; her voice caressed him. She restored him to self-respect.

And then she guided their talk back to Laurie.

"It's too bad your wife was out tonight, but if you didn't let her know, it wasn't her fault, poor girl! I am looking forward to getting to know her. I telephoned her twice in the first week you were away, but she was out. I didn't like to disturb her at her office."

"I think it's so romantic that she should have been working for Albery all the time. And last Sunday I went to your flat quite early, hoping I could get her to come and spend the day in the country with me, but I found from the woman who was working in the flat that she and her sister had gone down to spend the week end with Mr. Albery."

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Tomorrow Rex and Laurie come to a disturbing realization.

back to Texas, expecting to start Wednesday and go by the way of Missouri to look over some land in that state, which they recently purchased from Mr. Clinkenbeard.

Mr. and Mrs. Bovee and Mr. and Mrs. Billy Weir are entertaining relatives from Anaheim, Calif.

Two young daughters, Misses Martha and Betty, of R. W. White of the Rogue River Auto camp recently arrived from Los Angeles to make their home with their father. All four children are here now. Miss Jane and little Bobby having come with their father. Mr. White is expecting his wife to arrive any day.

Johnnie Karkon, the 'union king of Rogue River' is harvesting his grain but this weather has bothered Johnnie quite a bit.

Miss Harriet Cook is recovering nicely from her recent operation for appendicitis. She was operated on at the Community hospital in Medford.

Mrs. E. Dawson returned from Los Angeles the first of the week, coming north to help her husband get ready to move back to California. They built a beautiful home on the Evans creek road, but have decided they do not like farming and prefer to move back to the city.

GILLETT, FORMER CONGRESS CHIEF, PASSES, AGED 83

SPRINGFIELD, Mass., July 31.—(AP)—Frederick H. Gillett, former U. S. senator from Massachusetts and for six years speaker of the national house, died early today at Springfield hospital.

He was 83, a republican of the old guard. He served Massachusetts in the congress for 38 years.

He became a patient at Springfield hospital July 10, and on Monday attending physicians said death was imminent.

Dr. James Seaman said death was due to leukemia, a blood deficiency rare in men of his age. Mrs. Gillett and Dr. Seaman were with him when he died.

The former senator had been in retirement, writing his memoirs and spending his winters at Santa Barbara, Calif., since he left the senate in 1931.

He divided his time between his family at Westfield, Mass., where he spent his summers, and his winter home in California. He stopped a few weeks each year in Washington, where he maintained a residence.

In 1919 he succeeded the late Champ Clark as speaker of the house, where he had served since 1893. He was the first Massachusetts man chosen speaker since the Civil war.

After six years as speaker, he entered the Massachusetts senatorial fight and defeated David I. Walsh, who was seeking re-election. He retired after six years in the senate.

21 PER CENT GAIN IN LAKE TRAVEL

CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK, Ore., July 31.—Travel figures for the week ending last Sunday night reveal that 8211 people traveling in 2432 cars visited Crater Lake, as compared to 6773 people in 2008 cars for the same week in 1934. This is a gain of 21 per cent.

Stage travel showed a gain of 100 per cent or 70 stage passengers as compared to 35 for the same week of the year before. Indications are that August will be a busy travel month with an even bigger increase expected.

Housekeeping cabins at the rim are sold out practically every night and to gain these accommodations visitors are urged to make reservations in ample time. Accommodations at the lodge are also in great demand.

LIVERPOOL MART SENDS WHEAT UP

CHICAGO, July 31.—(AP)—Responding to unexpectations of Liverpool wheat quotations, grain prices here scored material advances early today. Traders were looking for bullish domestic crop estimates on Friday of this week. Opening 4-1 1/2 higher. Sept. 92 1/2-3/4. The Chicago wheat market soon established additional gains. Corn started 3-1 1/2 up. Sept. 76 1/2-77, and then altered little.

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NEIGHBORHOOD BASEBALL

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



WITH THE SCORE TIED AND THE BASES FULL IN THE NINTH, THE ELM STREET TIGERS CAN'T MAKE UP THEIR MINDS WHETHER TO BREAK ALL PRECEDENTS AND LET EDDIE SELZER'S SISTER, WHO CAN OUTHIT ANY MEMBER OF THE TEAM, GO IN TO BAT

7-30

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GLUYAS WILLIAMS

S-MATTER POP—



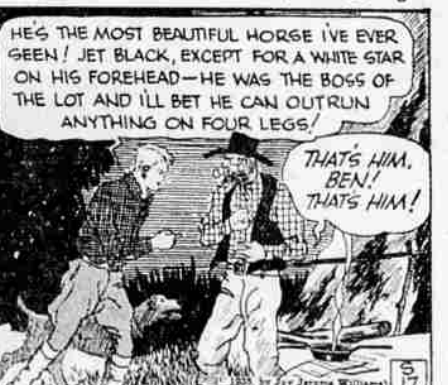
By C. M. Payne

TAILSPIN TOMMY—In Friendly Hands



By Hal Forrest

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Telling Cal



By Edwin Alger

THE NEBBS—The Skeptic



By Sol Hess

Evans Valley

EVANS VALLEY, July 31.—(Sp.)—Mrs. Vivian Norman Barto has opened a real estate office three-fifths of a mile south of Rogue River, on the Pacific highway, at the location that was formerly the California Sandwich shop. Mrs. Barto will handle listings, sales, exchanges and rentals.

John Kathon was home from Klamath Falls and spent the week-end with his family.

G. A. Astell of Grants Pass is hauling wood purchased from William Cunningham at Mrs. Catharine N. Laws ranch on Evans creek.

L. E. Clinkenbeard of Los Angeles has purchased the Posey interest in what was formerly known as the J. E. Bowen ranch, five miles north of Rogue River and enough adjoining land to total 520 acres. This he expects to improve and will have a very attractive ranch. Mrs. Clinkenbeard accompanied her husband to the ranch on Saturday. They are making their home near Ashland on a ranch which they lately purchased. Mr. Clinkenbeard has extensive holdings in California and southern Oregon.

Mr. and Mrs. Posey are moving

THE BUNGLE FAMILY—Strangers



By Harry J. Tuttle