

READY MADE WIFE

BY CORALIE STANTON

SYNOPSIS: Rex and Laurie Moore are pretending to be married, because it seems necessary in order that Rex may hold his job with Mark Albery, whose private secretary Laurie is. Each pretends that he loves the other, and neither can bring himself to tell Rex that he is having a call from "Gavin Drake," to whom Laurie had given an "interview" some time before, dealing with her supposed marriage.

Chapter 27 CROOK

MOORE stood in the doorway, looking down at his visitor. His stare was at first bewildered; then grew instinctively hostile, and finally a cold light of recognition came into his grey eyes.

"I know you," he said. "But I can't remember your name. You come from Sydney."

"My name is Gavin Drake. I am a newspaper man now, Moore. I'm over here on a holiday."

"That wasn't your name when I met you before," said the airman curtly, without asking him in. "What do you want?"

"I should be grateful for an interview."

"I don't give interviews."

"But for the sake of old times!" peralated the young man in that diffident manner that Laurie had at first found appealing, particularly as she had been touched by his empty sleeve.

"But Rex Moore was not touched at all."

"Come in," he said. "I know who you are now—you are Dunbar, the Steadfast Insurance Company in Sydney who cheated me out of all my savings on that wild-cat aerodrome scheme in Warratorra. It was you who got me to teach you to fly and then tried to become a stunt pilot, and crashed and lost your arm doing a fool trick I'd warned you against, and went about telling everybody it was my fault. And you were sacked by your company and would have been prosecuted for embezzlement if I'd told what I knew. Only, like a fool, I was sorry for you because you'd lost your arm."

The young man's face had turned a sickly grey for a few moments, but he soon recovered himself, knowing that he held a trump card. He did not inform Rex Moore that he had already interviewed his wife. It was clear that Mrs. Moore had not told her husband. She had got the wind up.

They were in the living room. Moore did not ask the young man to sit down.

"What do you want?" he asked again.

"Only an interview, Moore. You needn't be so snooty. Possibly I can be of use to you. I've got a commission for the New Sydney Record while I'm over here, and I'd be obliged for a little story about your recent flight."

"I've given all I'm going to, thanks. You're too late."

"Then, a little personal story, Moore. About your romantic marriage. All Australia would be keen on that. Particularly the women. A few facts, you know—when you were married, who married you, why it was kept a secret. I may say that I cabled over a little copy, just a few casual remarks on 'spec, you know. But it seems they can't find any record of your marriage, and it would go down like hot cakes, a statement from you."

REX MOORE towered over the young man.

"Blackmail, is it?" he asked quietly. "It w-n't do, Dunbar. What do you mean—they can't find records of my marriage? Who wants to find any? Whose business is it when and where I was married?"

"But my dear chap, of course it's frightfully interesting down there! And to an Australian girl. You must see—"

"I see nothing, except that my business is my own," said the airman shortly.

"You might have a heart and give me a leg up," put in Gavin Drake, with his most ingratiating smile. "Of course I don't want to do anything you wouldn't like, but I am in rather a bad way, and a good newspaper story would be the making of me. I wouldn't dream of doing it without your consent, of course, but you know how the public all over the world gobbles up a mystery—"

"Out with it!" interrupted Moore. His eyes were stormy. "Is it blackmail or is it not?"

Gavin Drake took heart. He had evidently landed a blow. He was

foible and knew it but his opponent was vulnerable.

"That's no word to use between you and me, Moore," he said, with an attempt at dignity. "I'm afraid I must admit that I'm down and out, and for the sake of old times, you might feel inclined to help me out—a loan, you know. Of course, I would repay it."

"That's right—it is blackmail," said the airman in a quiet tone of concentrated rage. "If you weren't a cripple, I'd kick you out of the place. My private affairs are my own. If you dare to cable anything about them to your beastly newspaper—and I don't believe you've got a commission for the New Sydney Record at all—if you so much as mention my name or my wife's in print, or spread any lying stories about me, I'll send all the information I have about you to Sydney and inform the police here, and you'll go to jail, where you belong! And that's all I've got to say. Good-morning!"

The young man was livid. Behind his thick glasses his little dark eyes saw red. But he controlled his rage and his panic and gave a little laugh.

"Good Lord, Moore, don't look as if you'd like to murder me! I didn't mean any harm."

"All right, then! Get out!"

He walked behind the young man to the front door, and slammed it behind him.

His temper was up. He had no prudence in his nature. He did not even realize that he had been foolish, that no public man can afford enemies, however small, however discredited. Certainly not when there is a decided chink in his own armor.

That was Rex Moore's way.

THE next day a young man with yellow hair, a small mustache, and heavy-lidded spectacles, called at the Albery office building on the Embankment and asked to see Mark Albery. He gave his card, inscribed—Gavin Drake—with the words "from Sydney, Australia, representing the 'New Sydney Record'" written on it.

His card did not reach Mark Albery.

He was told that Mr. Albery never granted interviews with strangers. It was impossible to see Mr. Albery in his office without an appointment. The polite clerk gave the young man to understand that Mr. Albery was as unapproachable as royalty.

Gavin Drake did not make an appointment. Instead, he went to Albery's flat in Chelsea rather late that same evening.

He ascertained that Mr. Albery was at home. He must have had an uncanny instinct, for he wrote on his card exactly the right message to procure him admission to the great man's presence. He wrote that he was from Sydney, Australia, a newspaper man, and that he would be very grateful if Mr. Albery would spare him a few moments. He had some important news concerning Mr. Rex Moore.

Albery's mind, insane with jealousy, ruminated automatically to Gavin Drake's mind, insane with hatred and revenge. He happened to be alone and he told his butler to show the visitor into his study.

As soon as he saw the young man, his knowledge of all sorts and conditions of men made him say to himself—"A blackmail!" He smiled and indicated an armchair near to his own.

Gavin Drake was full of nerve tonight. He had the unmistakable feeling that luck was with him. He was going with the tide. He did not trouble to choose his words. He said whatever came into his head.

"You are a newspaper man from Australia, Mr. Drake?" asked Albery in his toneless, commanding voice. "What paper do you represent?"

The young man explained about his roving commission from the "New Sydney Record."

"And you say you have news concerning Rex Moore, the airman? Are you a friend of his?"

"An acquaintance, sir. I knew him in Australia."

"Do you come here as a friend of his?"

"Not exactly. I have come to give you a piece of information that I think you ought to know. And, although he was not aware of it, his voice revealed all the venom and spite in his soul."

"I see. Then, you would not like me to ring up Moore and ask him to come along? He lives quite close."

"No," the young man looked alarmed.

"All right!" Albery was now satisfied. "Tell me, please, what you know and think I ought to know."

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Drake makes, tomorrow, a little money.

fruit situation from year to year. Most of the Bartletts bought by Mr. Hall will be run over graders and he has orders for pairs two and one-eighth inches and up, he stated today. This year's Bartletts are smoother than last season's although slightly smaller, and are perfect for new-type peelers installed in canneries.

Number two's will be very limited as his liberal allowance on that grade will practically absorb them into number one's. There are no women this year and there should be but few culls, according to Mr. Hall. As most of the growers have finished he expects canners buying to be several thousands tons under last fall.

SALEM, Aug. 5.—(AP)—Funeral services will be held here Tuesday afternoon for John Reinbeck, 75, auditor for the state industrial accident commission for 15 years, who died here Saturday following a long illness.

TRUCK OPERATORS TO BE PROTECTED IN FRUIT HAULING

In an effort to protect the legitimate truck operators in this territory from trucks operating without proper P. U. C. permit and plates the public utility commissioner will make a very careful check on trucks transporting fruit from orchards to packing plants this season. It was announced today by Marshall E. Nauman, field supervisor of the motor transportation department of the commission, who arrived here for a ten-day stay.

"We plan on protecting and cooperating with the legitimate carriers who are now operating within the provisions of their respective permits and feel that there is now in the southern Oregon territory a sufficient number of trucks to transport the fruit this year," said Mr. Nauman.

"There will be close supervision over carriers staying within their proper classification of their permit and also as to the correct rates to be charged and which are on file with the public utilities commissioner.

"In case of an emergency where there is not enough trucks to handle the movement of fruit and who do not have the proper permit, and in order that the movement of fruit will not be retarded, the commission will issue temporary contract permits will be in force for a period of 30 days. These permits will be issued from the state police headquarters in Medford.

"We wish also to call attention to the change in the motor transportation act made at the last session of the legislature in regard to farmers now supplied with exempt plates. According to the change made, a farmer now supplied with exempt plates can haul his own farm produce at any time but can only make five trips a month for his immediate neighbor and not more than 25 trips in a year. There is no limit on the load which he may haul but a very careful check will be made on these carriers, who are not staying within the limitations of their exemption.

"According to the law a shipper who violates the provisions of this act as to securing rates lower than those on file with the commission is also liable and the commission intends to check these shippers as to rates as well as the carriers who are now hauling produce for a rate below the established tariff on file with the commission."

Mr. Nauman will be available for truck owners of shippers information at the state police headquarters between 11 a. m. and 2 p. m. for the next ten days.

Use Mail Tribune want ads.

Building Permits

Permit granted to Walter Severna, 1301-3 North Riverside, for a battery and service station at a cost of \$600.

Harvey Buchter, 1103 North Riverside, was granted a permit to repair a porch at a cost of \$30.

Mrs. Blanche Virgin, 41 Barneburg Road, granted a permit to repair a garage and erect a fence at a cost of \$100.

O. T. Jackson, 319 South Grape street, was granted a permit to re-shingle and repair residence at a cost of \$50.

ROGUE RIVER GIRL TO MARRY EVERETT MAN

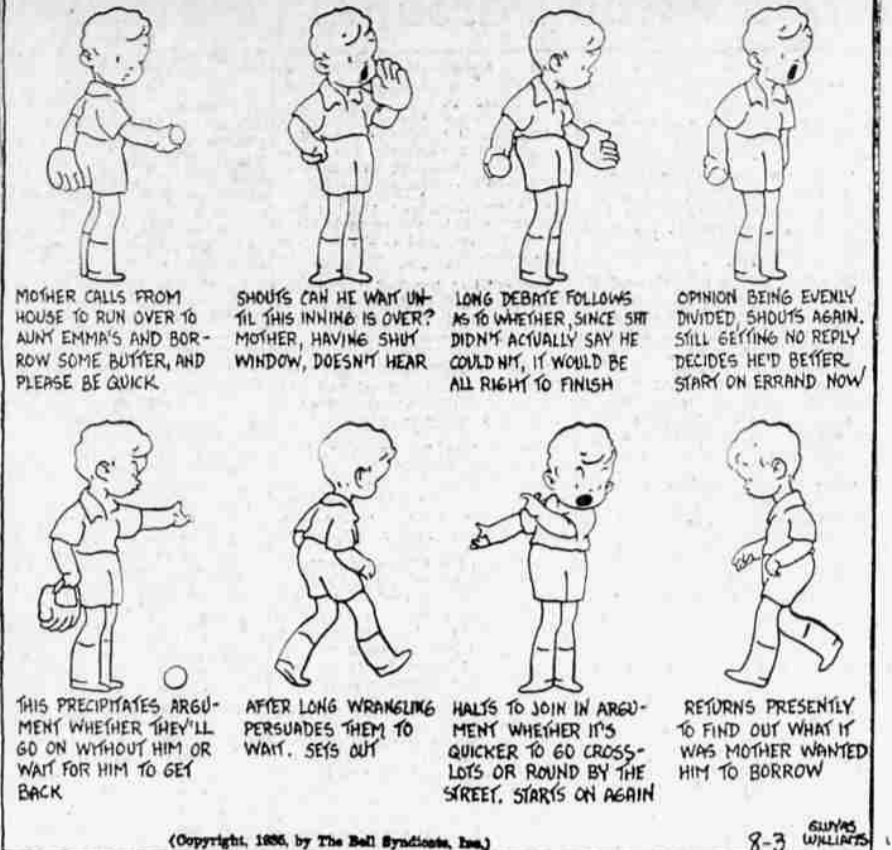
VANCOUVER, Wn., Aug. 5.—(AP)—A marriage license was issued here to Alex D. Field, 21, of Everett, and Florence Wills, 18, of Rogue River.

Von der Helten Goes North—William Von der Helten, contractor, left yesterday by train on a business trip to Eugene.



ERRAND

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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S-MATTER POP—



TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Abandoned Plane!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Cal Sees It



THE NEBB'S—The Mischief Maker



THE BUNGLE FAMILY—Going—



By C. M. Payne



By Hal Forrest



By Edwin Alger



By Sol Hess



By Harry J. Tutbill



HALL WILL ANNOUNCE PRICE ON BARTLETTS FOR CANNERS SOON

Courts Hall, one of southern Oregon's best known Bartlett pear growers, has established headquarters in the Tenwald offices, across from the Hialto theatre on West Main street, according to announcement made today.

Representing Schuckle and Company of Sunnyside, and the Starr Fruit and Products company, of Portland, Ore., Mr. Hall expects to quote opening prices for Rogue River valley Bartletts within a short time. Being a pear grower himself, he is thoroughly familiar with the