

Marion

The Story of an Artist's Model

*By The Author
of "Me"*

*Illustrated by
Henry Hutt*

SYNOPSIS: Here we have the story, told at first-hand, of Marion Ascough, sister of "Me," a girl destined to eventually travel far—Montreal, Boston, New York, and even to "Bohemia," accumulating experiences by the way—clinging to the highest ideals, as artist, model, friend of painters, and finally the wife of an artist. She was born in the queer little French-Canadian village of Hochelaga, a suburb of Montreal; her father was an English painter, her mother a Frenchwoman. Here Monsieur de St. Vidal proposed to her in the snow, and she ran home. Then she had a bent for the stage and made a hit in amateur theatricals. Along came Mr. Reggie Bertie—call him Bartie, so English, you know—remittance-man, who is studying for the bar. It was a case of love at first sight between handsome Reggie and pretty Marion Ascough. He took her to the ice carnival and when he should have been watching the procession he was looking down at her. Later, he refuses to take her into a flashy all-night restaurant because Marion is "too nice and too sweet." Very soon they become engaged, but while Bertie is an ardent wooer he does not want the marriage to take place; he's afraid of "the governor" over in England, so poor Marion is in for a long wait, during which she must be self-supporting at painting and other art work, besides helping at home. Then she hires a little studio of her own—Reggie pays for it—in Montreal; Reggie still procrastinates. At last she tells him that he has no right to monopolize her time and her society unless he intends to fulfill his promise,—particularly as he objects to her seeing any other men.

MY younger sister, Nellie, had married her Frenchman. The family began to look upon me, as they did on Ada, as an old maid! And I was only twenty-one. Nevertheless I had been engaged to Reggie since my seventeenth year.

Reggie had been much wrapped up in certain elections, and I had seen him only for a few minutes each day, when one night he came over to the studio. He looked very handsome and reckless. I think he had been drinking, for there was a strange look about his eyes, and when he took me in his arms I thought he was never going to let me go. Whenever Reggie was especially kind to me I always thought it a good time to broach the subject of our marriage. So now I said:

"Reggie, don't you think it would be lovely if we could arrange to be married in June? I hate to think of another summer alone."

It was a clean, sweet night in April and my windows were all open. There was the fragrance of growing green in the air, and it seemed as warm as an early summer day. I felt happy, and oh, so drawn to my handsome Reggie, as he held me closer in his arms.

He put his warm face right down on mine, and he whispered:

"Darling girl, if we were to marry, you cannot imagine the mess it would make of my career. My father would never forgive me. Don't you see, my whole future might be ruined. If you loved me, you would make some little sacrifice for me."

Something snapped in my head! I pushed him from me with my hands doubled into fists. For the first time I saw Reginald Bertie clearly! My sister was right. He was a monument of selfishness and egotism. He was worse! He was a beast, who had taken from me all my best years, and now—now he made a proposition to me that was vile!—me, the girl he had asked to

be his wife! What had I done, then, that he should have changed like this to me? I was guilty of no fault, save that of poverty. I know that had I been possessed of those things that Reggie prized so much, never would he have insulted me like this.

I felt him approaching me with his arms held out, but I backed away from him, and suddenly I found myself hysterically speaking those lines from "Camille." I was pointing to the door.

"That's your way!" I screamed at him. "Go!"

"Marion—darling—forgive me—I didn't mean that."

But I wouldn't listen to him, and when at last I had got him out of my room I locked and bolted the door upon him.

I did not sleep all of that night, and when the morning dawned I had made up my mind what to do.

I packed up all my things and then I went out to see Lu Frazer. I told her I was going to leave Montreal—that I wanted to go to the States—to Boston, where that artist had told papa I ought to study. I felt sure I would get work there, and could study besides. I borrowed twenty-five dollars from Lu, and promised to pay her back thirty-five within three months.

When I got back to my studio, I found this letter from Reggie:



HENRY HUTT *

"Darling Marion," coaxed Reggie, "if we were to marry my whole career might be ruined." She pushed him away with both fists now that his true intentions were revealed.

Darling:

I know you will forgive your heart-broken Reggie, who was not himself last night. All shall be as it was between us, and I swear to you that never again will I say anything to my little girl that will hurt her feelings.

Your repentant REGGIE.

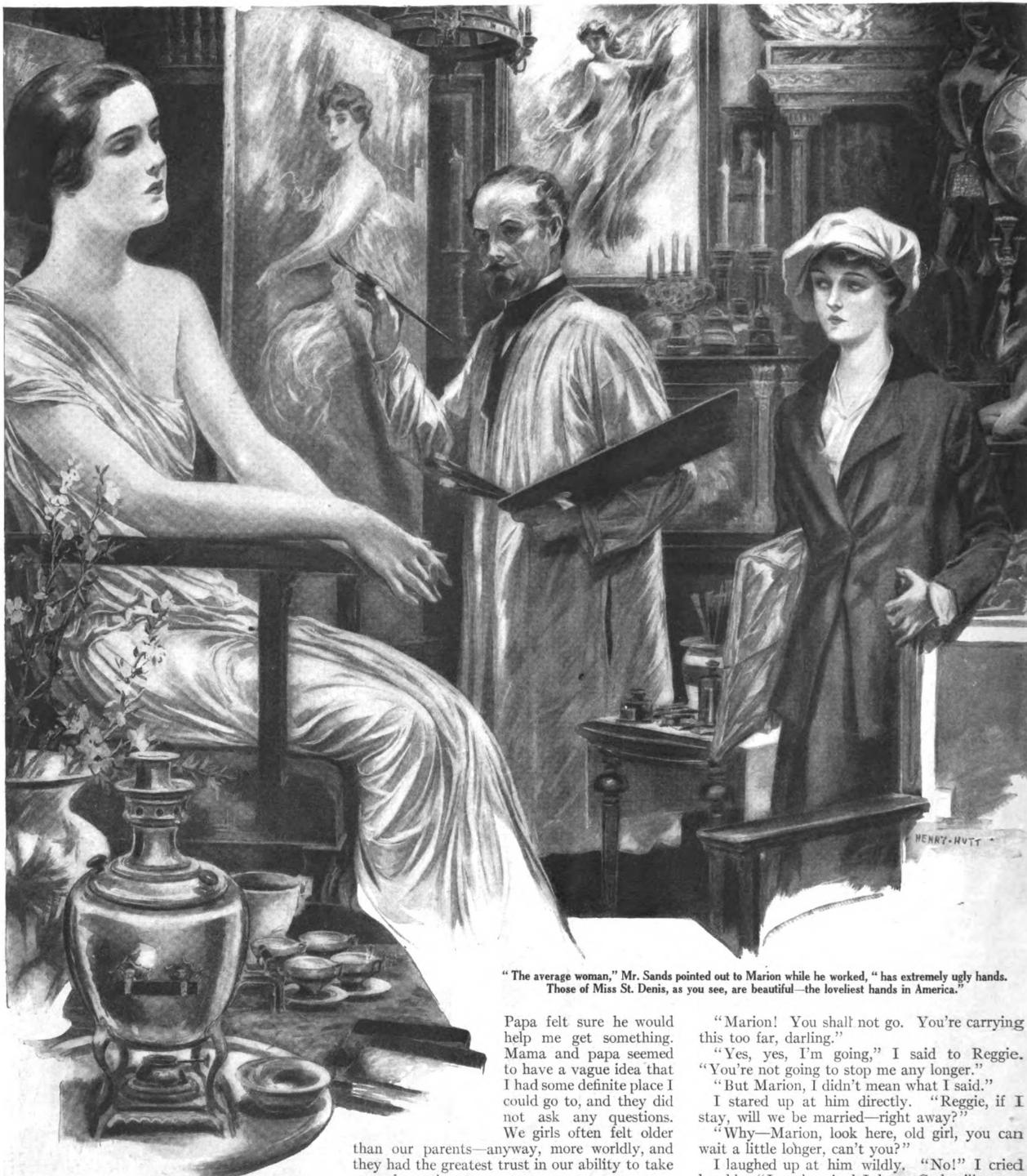
I crushed his letter in my hand. I felt that my love for him was dead. I never wanted to see him again. He had sacrificed me for the sake of his selfish ambitions.

My train was to leave at eight, and Lu was

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"The average woman," Mr. Sands pointed out to Marion while he worked, "has extremely ugly hands. Those of Miss St. Denis, as you see, are beautiful—the loveliest hands in America."

going to be there to see me off. I sat down and wrote the following letter to Reggie before leaving the house:

Dear Reggie:

I am leaving for Boston to-night. I have loved you very dearly, and I feel bad at leaving you without saying good-by, but I will not live any longer in that studio that you pay for, and I could not stand home any more.

I can earn my living better in Boston, and when you are ready I will come back to you, but I cannot trust myself to say good-by.

Your loving MARION.

Then I went down to Hochelaga, and said good-by to them all at home. Papa hunted up the address of Mr. Sands, the artist for whom I had done that work when a little girl of thirteen.

Papa felt sure he would help me get something. Mama and papa seemed to have a vague idea that I had some definite place I could go to, and they did not ask any questions. We girls often felt older than our parents—anyway, more worldly, and they had the greatest trust in our ability to take care of ourselves.

Ada thought it a good thing for me to go. She said I would get better pay for my work in Boston and that I must be sure to send something home each week, just as Nora was doing.

I felt a lump in my throat when I left the old house. There was still a bit of snow in the garden, though it was April, where I had played as a child. I put my head out of the cab window to take a last look at the familiar places which, I told myself with a sob, I might never see again.

Lu was at the station. She had my ticket, and the balance of the twenty-five dollars in an envelope, which she slipped into my hand. The train was nearly due to go. My foot was on the step when I heard Reggie's voice, calling my name. He came running down the platform.

"Marion! You shall not go. You're carrying this too far, darling."

"Yes, yes, I'm going," I said to Reggie. "You're not going to stop me any longer."

"But Marion, I didn't mean what I said."

I stared up at him directly. "Reggie, if I stay, will we be married—right away?"

"Why—Marion, look here, old girl, you can wait a little longer, can't you?"

I laughed up at him wildly. "No!" I cried harshly, "I can't. And I hope God will never let me see your face again."

I ran up the steps of the train and darted inside. I did not look out.

Never shall I forget that journey in the train. I had not thought to get a sleeper, so I sat up all night long. I had the whole seat to myself. The conductor turned the next seat over toward me, and by putting up my feet I was fairly comfortable.

I shut my eyes, and tried to go to sleep, but the thoughts that came thronging through my head were too many. I wept for my lost sweetheart, and yet I vowed never to go back to him. His future should not be spoiled by me.

Oh, as I thought of how many times Reggie

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had said that, a feeling of helpless rage against him took possession of me. I saw him in all his ambitious, selfish, narrow snobbery and pride. Even his love for me was a part of his peculiar fastidiousness. He wanted me for himself, because I was prettier than most girls, just as he wanted all luxurious things, but he never stopped to think of my comfort or happiness.

Somewhat as the train slipped farther and farther and farther away from Montreal, Reggie's influence over me seemed to be vanishing, and presently, as I gazed out into the night, he passed away from my mind altogether.

We were passing through dark meadows, and they looked gloomy and mysterious under that starlit sky. I thought of how papa had taught us all so much about the stars, and how he said one of our ancestors had been a great astronomer. Ada knew all of the planets and suns by name, and could pick them out, but to me they were always little points of mystery. I remembered as a little girl I used to look up at them and say to one particular star:

"Star bright, star light
First star I see to-night
Wish I may—wish I might
Get the wish I wish to-night."

Then I would say quickly: "Give me a doll's carriage."

Ada had told me if I did that for seven nights, the fairies would give me whatever I asked for, and each night I asked for that doll's carriage. I watched to see it come, and I would say to Ada:

"What's the matter with those old fairies? I thought you said they'd give me my wish?"

Ada would answer: "Oh, fairies are invisible, and no doubt the carriage is right near by, but you can't see it."

"But what's the use," I would say, "of a carriage I can't see?"

"Try it again," would say Ada. "Perhaps they'll relent. You probably offended them, or didn't do it just right."

For seven nights more I would faithfully repeat the formula. Then, at Ada's suggestion, I would hunt in the tall grass at the end of the garden.

"Perhaps," would say Ada, "there is a fairy sitting on the edge of a blade of grass, and she has the carriage."

Then I would lie in the grass, and wait for the carriage to become visible. I never got that doll's carriage. The fairies never relented.

I dozed for a little while, and was awakened by the faint crowing of cocks, and I thought sleepily of a little pet chicken I used to dress in baby's clothes, and I dreamed of a lovely wax doll that Mrs. McAlpin had given me.

It was queer how, as I lay there, all these little details of my childhood came up to my mind. I saw that wax doll as plainly as if I had it in my arms again. My brother, Charles, had taken a slate pencil and had made two cruel marks on its sweet face, and had left the house laughing at my rage and grief. All day long I had nursed my doll, rocking it back and forth in my arms and sobbing:

"Oh, my doll! Oh, my doll!"

Ada had said: "Don't be silly. Dolls don't feel. But she is disfigured for life, like smallpox." I threw her down. I rushed up to Charles's room bent upon avenging her. Hanging on the

wall was a lacrosse stick, the most treasured possession of my brother. I seized a pair of scissors, and I cut the catgut of that lacrosse. As it snapped, I felt a pain and terror in my heart. I tried to mend it, but it was ruined. Ada's shocked face showed at the door.

"I'm glad!" I cried to her defiantly.

"Poor Charles," said Ada, "saved up all of his little money to get that stick, and he did all those extra chores, and he's the captain of the Shamrock Lacrosse team. You are a mean, wicked girl, Marion."

"I tell you, I'm glad!" I declared fiercely.

But when Charles came home, and saw it, he held that stick to his face and burst out crying, and Charles never, never cried. I felt like a murdereress, and I cried out:

"Oh, I'm sorry, Charles. Here's all my pennies. You buy a new one."

"You devil!" he stormed, and lifted up his hand to strike me. I fled behind papa's chair, but I wished, oh! how I wished, that Charles would forgive me.

It all came back to me, like a dream, in the train, and I found myself crying for Charles even as I had cried then.

And again I began to think of Reggie—Reggie who had hurt me so terribly; Reggie, whom I had thought I loved—loved above everybody else in the world. What was it he had said to me? That I should be his wife without a ceremony! I sat up in the seat. I felt frozen stiff. I was looking at the naked truth in the plain light of day. The glamour was gone from my romance. I was awake to the bare, ugly facts.

The train was moving slowly, and someone said we were nearing Boston. I shook off all memories of Montreal, and an expectant feeling of excitement came over me. What did this big United States mean to me? I felt suddenly light and happy and free! Free! That was a beautiful word, that everyone used in this "Land of Liberty."

I went into the dressing-room and washed my face and hands and did my hair afresh. A girl was before the mirror, dabbing powder and rouge over her face, and she took up all the room, so I could not get a glimpse of myself in the mirror.

"You look as fresh as a daisy," she said, turning around and looking at me; "and I guess you've had a good night's rest. I hardly sleep in those stuffy sleepers, and my fellow's to meet me, so I don't want to look a fright."

I asked if we were near to Boston, and she said we were there now. The train had come to a standstill. When I left the train with my bag in my hand I felt excited and a little bit afraid. I realized that I had no especial destination, and the part of the city where the station was did not look as if it was the place to find a room. There were many cars passing, and I finally got on one, a Columbus Avenue.

As we rode along, I looked out of the window, and watched the houses for a "Room to Let" sign, and presently we came to some tall, stone houses, all very much alike, and ugly and severe-looking after our pretty Montreal houses with their bits of lawn and sometimes even little gardens in front. There were "Room to Let" signs on nearly all the houses in this block. So I got out, and went up the high steps of the one I thought looked the cleanest.

I rang the bell, and a black woman opened the door. I said:

"Is your mistress in?" and she said: "How?"

We never say "How?" like that in Canada. If we aren't polite enough to say: "I beg your pardon?" then we say: "What?" So I thought she meant how many rooms did I want, and I said: "Just one, thank you."

She walked down the hall, and I heard her say to someone behind a curtain there:

"Say, Miss Darling, there's a girl at the door. I think she's a furrier. She sure talks and looks like no folks I know."

There was a slight laugh, and then a faded little woman in a faded kimono came hurrying down the hall. I call her "faded looking," because that describes her very well. Her face, once pretty, no doubt, made me think of a

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Kneeling before the open window under the stars, Marion prayed with all her heart and soul: "Father in heaven hear me! If I ever go back to Reggie may all kinds of ills come upon me! Amen."

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began to fade away. She lost thirty pounds in a single month, but she was the "pluckiest little sport ever," said the lodger.

It seemed to me our stories were not unlike, and I wondered to myself whether Reggie was capable of being as base as was Miss Darling's lover.

While I was taking my things out of my suitcase Miss Darling watched me with a rather curious expression, and suddenly she said:

"I don't know what you intend to do, but take my advice. Don't be too easy. If I were as young and pretty as you, I tell you, I would make every son-of-a-gun pay me well."

I said: "I'll be contented if I can just get work soon."

She looked at me with a queer, bitter little smile, and then she said:

"It doesn't pay to work. I've worked all my life."

Then she laughed bitterly, and went out suddenly closing the door behind her.

As soon as I had washed and changed from my heavy Canadian coat to a little blue-cloth suit I had made myself, I started out at once to look up the artist, Mr. Sands, whose address papa had given me.

I lost my way several times. I always got lost in Boston. The streets were like a maze, winding around and running off in every direction. I finally found the studio building on Boylston Street, and climbed up four flights of stairs. When I got to the top, I came to a door with a neat little visiting card with Mr. Sands's name upon it. I remembered that Count von Hatfield had his card on the door like this, and for the first time I had an instinctive feeling that my own large Japanned sign: "Miss Ascough, Artist, etc." was funny and provincial. Even papa had never put up such a sign, and when he first saw mine he had laughed and then had run his hand absently through his hair and said he "supposed it was all right" for the kind of work I expected to do. Dear papa! He wouldn't have hurt my feelings for worlds. With what pride had I not shown him my sign and "studio"!

I knocked on Mr. Sands's door, and presently he himself opened it. At first he did not know me, but when I stammered:

"I'm—Miss Ascough. D-don't you remember me? I did some work for you in Montreal eight years ago, and you told me to come to Boston. Well—I've come!"

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated; "did I ever tell anybody to come to Boston? Good heavens!" And he stood staring at me, as if he still were unable to place me. Then, after another pause, during which he stared at me curiously, he said:

"Come in, come in!"

While he was examining me, with his palette stuck on his thumb, and a puzzlet look on his face, as if he didn't quite know what to say to me or do with me, I looked about me.

It was a very luxurious studio, full of beautiful draperies and tapestries. I was surprised, as the bare stairs I had climbed and the outside of the building were most unbeautiful. Sitting on a raised platform was a very lovely girl, dressed in a Greek costume, but the face on the canvas of the easel was not a bit like hers.

Mr. Sands, as though he had all of a sudden really placed me in his mind, held out his hand and shook mine heartily, exclaiming:

"Oh, yes, yes, now I remember. Ascough's little girl. Well, well, and how is dear old Montreal? And your father, and his friend—what was his name? Minimum—let me see—that German artist—you remember him? He was crazy—a madman!"

Lorenz was the artist he meant. He was a great friend of my father's. Papa thought him a genius, but mama did not like him at all, because she said he used such blasphemous language and had a bad influence on papa. I remember I used to love to hear him shout and declaim and denounce all the shams in art and the Church. He was a man of immense stature, with a huge head like Walt Whitman's. He used to come to the Château to see the Count, with whom he had long arguments and quarrels. He was German and the Count a Dane. He would shout excitedly at the Count and wave his arms, and the Count would shriek and double up with laughter sometimes, and Mr. Lorenz would shout: "Bravo! Bravo!"

They talked in German, and I couldn't understand them, but I think they were making fun of English and American art. And for the Canadian! The mere mention of Canadian art was enough to make the old Count and Lorenz explode.

Poor old Lorenz! He never made any

money, and was awfully shabby. One day papa sent him to Reggie's office to try to sell a painting to the senior partner, who professed to be a connoisseur. Mr. Jones, the partner, came out from his private office in a hurry, and seeing Lorenz waiting, mistook him for a beggar. He put his hand in his pocket and gave Lorenz a dime. Then he passed out. Lorenz looked at the dime and said:

"Vell, it will pay me two beers."

I told Mr. Sands all about Lorenz and also about the Count I had worked for; about papa, some of whose work the Duke of Argyll had taken back to England with him, as representative of Canadian art (which it was not—papa had studied in France, and was an Englishman, not a Canadian), and of my own "studio." While I talked, Mr. Sands went on painting. The model watched me with what I thought a very sad expression. Her dark eyes were as gentle and mournful as the Madonna's. She didn't look unlike our family, being dark and foreign-looking. She was French. Mr. Sands was painting her arms and hands on the figure on the canvas. He explained that the face belonged to the wife of Senator Chase. She was the leader of a very smart set in Brookline. He said that the ladies who sat for their portraits usually got tired by the time their faces were finished, and he used models for the figures, and especially the hands.

"The average woman," said Mr. Sands, "has extremely ugly hands. The hands of Miss St. Denis, as you see, are beautiful—the most beautiful hands in America."

I was standing by him at the easel, watching him paint, and I asked him if it were really a portrait, for the picture looked more like a Grecian dancing figure. Mr. Sands smiled and said:

"That's the secret of my success, child. I never paint portraits as portraits. I dress my sitters in fancy costumes and paint them as some character. There is Mrs. Olivet. Her husband is a wholesale grocer. I am going to paint her as *Carmen*. This spirituelle figure with the filmy veil about her, is Mrs. Ash Browning, a dead-and-alive wishy-washy individual; but, as you see, her 'beauty' lends itself peculiarly to the nymph she there represents."

I was so much interested in listening to him, and watching him work, that I had forgotten what I had come to see him about, till presently he said:

"So you are going to join the classes at the Academy?"

That question recalled me, and I said hastily:

"I hope so, by-and-by. First, though, I shall have to get some work to do."

He stopped painting, and stared at me, with his palette stuck in his hand, and as he had looked at me when he opened the door.

I unwrapped the package I had brought along with me, and showed him the piano scarf I had painted as a sample, a landscape I had copied from one of papa's and some miniatures I had painted on celluloid. I said:

"People won't be able to tell the difference from ivory when they are framed, and I can do them very quickly, as I can trace them from a photograph underneath, do you see?"

His eyes bulged, and he stared at me harder than ever. I also showed him some charcoal sketches I had done from casts, and a little painting of our kitten playing on the table. He picked this up and looked at it, and then set it down muttering something I thought was "Not so bad." After a moment he picked it up again and then he stared at me a moment and said:

"I think you have some talent, and you have come to the right place to study."

"And work, Mr. Sands," I said. "I've come here to earn my living. Can you give me some painting to do?"

He put down his palette and nodded to Miss St. Denis to rest. Then he took hold of my hand and said:

"Now, Miss Ascough, I am going to give you some good advice, chiefly because you are from my old Montreal" (Mr. Sands was Canadian), "because of your father and our friend, good old man Lorenz. Finally because I think it is my duty. Now, young lady, take my advice. If your parents can afford to pay your expenses here, stay and go to the art schools. But, if you expect to make a living by your painting in Boston, take the next train and go home!"

"I can't go home!" I cried. "Oh, I'm sure you must be mistaken. Lots of women earn their livings as artists. Why shouldn't I? I worked for Count von Hatfield, and he said I had more talent than the average woman who paints."

"How much did he pay you?" demanded Mr. Sands.

"Five dollars a week and sometimes extra," I said. Mr. Sands laughed.

"You would starve on that here, even if you could make it, which I doubt. In Montreal you had your home and friends. It's a different matter here altogether."

I felt as I once did when, as a child, I climbed to the top of a cherry-tree, and Charles had taken away the ladder, and I tried to climb down without it. I kept repeating desperately:

"I won't go back! I tell you, I won't!"

No, no, nothing will induce me to go back!"

I gathered up all my paintings. I felt distracted and friendless. Mr. Sands had returned to his painting and he seemed to have forgotten me. I saw the model waltz me, and she leaned over and said something in a whisper to Mr. Sands. He put his palette down again and said:

"Come, Miss St. Denis. This will do for today. We all need a bit of refreshment. Miss Ascough looks tired."

I was, and hungry too. I had eaten no lunch, for I had lost so much time looking for Mr. Sands's studio.

He brought out a bottle wrapped in a napkin, and a big plate of cakes. He said:

"I want you to taste my own special brand of champagne cocktail."

He talked a great deal then about brands of wines and mixtures, while I munched on the cakes, which I found difficulty in swallowing, because of the lump in my throat. But I was determined not to break down before them, and I even drank some of the cocktail he mixed for me. Presently I said:

"Well, I guess I'll go," and I gathered up my things. Mr. Sands stood up, and put his hands on my shoulders. Miss St. Denis was standing at his elbow, and she watched me all the time he was speaking.

"Now, Miss Ascough, I am going to make a suggestion to you. I see you are determined not to go back. The only way I can think of your making a living is by posing."

I drew back from him.

"I am an artist," I said, "and the daughter of an artist."

He patted me on the back.

"That's all right. I know how you feel. I've been a Canadian myself; but there's no use getting mad with me for merely trying to help you. You will starve here in Boston, and I'm simply pointing out to you a method of earning your living. There's no disgrace connected with such work if it is done in the proper spirit. As far as that goes, many of the art students are earning extra money to help pay their tuition that way. The models here get pretty good pay. Thirty-five cents an hour for costume posing and fifty cents for the nude. We're here in Boston pay better than they do in New York, and we treat them better, too. Of course, there are not so many of us here, and we haven't as much work, but a model can make a fair living, isn't that so, Miss St. Denis?"

She nodded, slowly, her eyes still on me; but there was something warm and pitying in their dark depths.

"Now," went on Mr. Sands, "I don't doubt that you will get plenty of work. You are an exceedingly pretty girl. I don't need to tell you that, for of course you know it. Are you eighteen yet?"

"I'm nearly twenty-two."

"You don't look it. The hands are all right—fine—and your feet," he smiled as I shrank under his gaze, "they seem very little. Small feet are not always shapely, but I dare say yours are. Your hair—and your coloring—Yes, I think you will do famously. It's rather late in the season—but I dare say you'll get something. Now what do you say? Give over this notion of painting for awhile, and perhaps I can get you some work right away."

"I'll never, never, never pose—nude," I said.

"Hm! Well, well—of course, that's what we need most. It's easy to get costume models—many of our women friends even pose at that. However, now, would you consider it very *insa dig*, then to pose for me, say to-morrow, in this Spanish scarf. You are just the type I need, and I believe I can help you with some of the other artists."

I thought of the few dollars I had left. I had only about twelve dollars in all. Mr. Sands said he would pay me the regular rate, though I was not experienced. After a moment's thought I said:

"Yes, I'll do it."

"Now, that's talking sensibly," he said smiling, "and Miss St. Denis here will take

you with her to other places to see about getting work."

She said: "Yes, certainement, I will do so. You come wiz me now."

I thanked Mr. Sands, and he patted me on the shoulder and told me not to worry. He said he would give me some work regularly till about the middle of May when he went away for the summer. I would get thirty-five cents an hour, and pose two hours a day for him.

When we got to the street the lights were all lit, and the city looked very big to me. Miss St. Denis invited me to have dinner with her. She knew a place where they served a meal for twenty-five cents. She seemed to think that quite cheap. I told her I couldn't afford to pay that much every night and she said:

"Well, you will do so by-and-by. Soon you will get more work."

After dinner, she took me to a night school, where she posed, as she said she wished me to see how it was done. Of course, I had already seen Lil Markey pose for the Count, but she was just an amateur model then. It did seem worse to me, moreover, to go out there before a whole class than before one man. Miss St. Denis seemed surprised when I said that, and she declared it was quite the other way.

That night I sat in my little narrow bedroom, and looked out of the window, and I thought of all I had learned that day, and it seemed clear to me that Mr. Sands was right. There was little opportunity for me to make a living as an artist in Boston.

What was to become of me, then? Should I return home? The thought of doing that made me clinch my hands passionately together and cry to myself:

"No, no, never, never!"

I remembered something Mr. Davis had said to me when he was teaching me to act. He said that I should forget my own personality and try to imagine myself the person I was playing. Why should I not do this as a model? I resolved to try it. It could not be so bad, since Mr. Sands had recommended it. Yes, I would do it! I would be a model! But I should not tell them at all.

With the resolve came first a sense of calmness, and then suddenly a rush of rage against Reggie who had driven me to this. I had the small-town English girl's foolish contempt for a work I really had no reason for despising. As the daughter of an artist, and as I thought, an artist myself, it seemed to me I was signing the death-warrant of my best ambitions, and, as I have said, with rage, that Reggie was to blame for this. I looked out of that window and, lifting up my eyes and hands to the skies, I called: "Father in heaven, hear me, and if I ever go back to Reggie, may all kinds of ills come upon me. Amen!"

Now, I thought, as I got into that folding-bed, "I don't dare to go back, for God will punish me if I do."

MY trunk arrived next morning, and the driver charged me fifty cents to bring it from the station. I had always seen Reggie tip the drivers, so I offered him a nickel. The driver was a big, good-natured looking fellow, and he looked at the tip and then at this little room, and he said:

"I'll not take the tip, kid, but I'll be catching you around the corner some evening, and take a kiss instead."

He had such a merry twinkle in his eye and looked so kind, that somehow I didn't resent his familiarity. I even vengefully laughed to myself, to think how Reggie would have looked to hear that common man speak to me like that.

All next day I went with Miss St. Denis to the studios and schools, waiting for her in some of them while she posed, and stopping only for a few minutes in others while she introduced me. I got several engagements and Miss St. Denis made me jot them down in a notebook she brought along. She said I must take everything offered to me, but that I must be careful not to get my hours mixed. I should even work at night, if necessary, for the season was almost over, and soon I would have difficulty in getting engagements.

Miss Darling had told me about a boarding-place opposite her house, where I could get board for three dollars a week. I crossed over that evening, and entered one of those basement dining-rooms that lined almost the whole avenue. I had a newspaper with me, and while I waited for my dinner I went over the advertisements.

I was interrupted by a stir and movement in the room. A girl had come in with a little dog, and everybody was looking at

the dog. She came over to my table and took the seat directly in front of me. I stared at her. I could not believe my eyes. There, sitting right at my table, was my little sister Nora! I thought she was in Jamaica. We both jumped to our feet and screamed our names, and then I began to cry, and Nora said:

"Sh-h! They are all looking at us!"

The dining-room was full of medical students and Harvard students. I had noticed them when I came in—one reason why I buried myself in the paper, because they all looked at me, and one, a boy named Jimmy Odell (I got to know Jimmy well later), tried to catch my eye, and when I did look at him once, he winked at me which made me very angry, and I hadn't looked up once again till Nora came in.

You may be sure those students didn't take their eyes off us all through that meal, and every one of them fed Nora's dog. They had started to laugh and hurrah when Nora and I first grabbed each other, but when I cried they all stopped and pretended to fuss with the dog.

I don't know what I ate that day. Nora said I ate my meal mixed with salt tears, but she too was excited and we both talked together. Nora had changed. She seemed more sophisticated than when I saw her last, and she had her hair done up. She showed me this almost the first thing, and she said it made her look quite as old as I. She thought that fine. She assumed an older-sister way with me which was very funny, for I had always snubbed her at home as being a kid while I was a young lady.

When we went to her room, which, strange to say, was in the same block as mine, two of the students followed us, one of them that Odell. We didn't pay any attention to them, though Odell had the insolence to run up the steps when Nora was turning the key in the lock, and ask if he couldn't do it for her. We both regarded him haughtily, which made him ashamed, I suppose, for he lifted his hat and ran down the stairs again.

Nora was expecting money by telegraph from some doctor in Richmond, for whom she was going to work. She had been doing the same sort of work as Ada, writing for a newspaper, and she had written "tons of poetry and stories and other things," she said.

I wanted to talk over home things and the work we were to do, but Nora made me listen to all her stories. She would pile up the two pillows on her bed for a comfortable place for me, and then coax me to lie there while she read. She would say:

"Now, Marion, let me make you comfortable, and you rest yourself—you look awfully tired, and I'm sure you need a rest! While I read you this."

Then she would read one story after the other, till I would get dead tired, but if I closed my eyes she would get offended; so I'd hold them open, no matter how sleepy I got. Sometimes I couldn't help laughing at the funny parts in her stories, which delighted her, and she would laugh more than I would, which made her little dog yelp and jump about. Then, when I cried at sad parts, she would get much excited, and say:

"Now I know it must be good. Some day huge audiences in big theaters all over the world will be crying just as you are now!"

Then her dog would jump up and lick her face, and I would say:

"Don't you think that's enough for to-night?"

Poor little Nora! She had hardly any money, but it didn't seem to bother her a bit. Though I knew I would miss her, I advised her to take the steady position offered in Richmond, instead of staying here, and a few days later I saw her off for the South. She looked pathetic and awfully childish (in spite of her hair done up), and I felt more lonely than ever. I was crying when I got back to the lodging-house, and when I opened the door Miss Darling was standing talking to some man in the hall. She called to me just as I was going up the stairs:

"Miss Ascough, here's a nice young gentleman wants to meet you."

I came back down the stairs, and there was that Harvard student, Odell. He had a wide smile on his face, and his hand held out. There was something so friendly and winning in that smile, and somehow the pressure of his big hand on mine felt so warm and comforting, and I was so lonely, that when he asked me to go out with him to dinner and after that to the theater I said at once: "Yes, I will."

Thus began my acquaintance with a boy who devoted himself to me throughout his stay in Boston.

(To be continued in August)

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