

# Marion

*The Story of an Artist's Model*  
By The Author of "Me"  
Illustrated by  
Henry Flutt

**SYNOPSIS:** Here we have the story, told at first-hand, of Marion Ascough, sister of "Me," a girl destined to travel far—accumulating experiences by the way—clinging to high 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 to 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 fulfil his promise,—particularly as he objects to her seeing any other men. She goes to Boston, and there becomes a full-fledged model.

I HAD been posing for various artists for nearly two months, and I not only was used to the work but beginning to like it. How else, except as a model, could I have seen all I did at close range and, in a way, assisted in the making of many great paintings by the best artists in Boston? Also I learned much from them, for nearly every artist I posed for talked to me as he worked. Some would tell me their hopes and fears and stories about other artists. I have even been the confidante of their love affairs.

One well-known painter proposed to a girl upon my advice. He told me all about his acquaintance with her, and of the opposition of her family, as if he were telling a story, and then he asked:

"What would you do if you were the man in the case?"

I replied: "I'd go right over and ask her to-night," whereupon he picked up his hat and said resolutely:

"I'll do better than that. I'll go this minute."

One artist, famous for his paintings of sunlight, used to talk all the time he worked, and I realized that he was not talking to me but at me, for when I answered he didn't hear at all.

I didn't make, of course, more than a living posing in costume, but for a time I got about four hours' work a day. It was not always regular, and sometimes I didn't even get that much

time. There were days when I had no work at all, so I barely made enough to pay for my room and board. I realized that I would have to do something to increase my earnings, and I tried to get work to do at night schools. Miss St. Denis had told me there would be little chance there unless I would pose undraped, and that I was determined not to do, but as the summer approached my work grew less and less, for the artists began to go away, just as Miss St. Denis had told me they would.

Though Mr. Sands had said I was an exceed-

"Now I'm going to kill you!" raved the insane Harper, seizing hold of Marion's wrists and dragging her toward the window, threatening to throw her out!

ingly pretty girl, I found that such was by no means an exceptional possession, and especially among the models. There were much prettier girls than I, to say nothing of the many girl friends and relatives of the artists who were often willing to pose for them. So my good looks did not prove as profitable as I had hoped. Moreover, I was new at the work, had an acquaintance to build up, and at first tired quicker than the older models.

However, I made a number of good friends among the artists. One of them, dear old Mr. Rintoul, had a studio in that long row of studios near the Art Gallery.

One day I knocked at his door and applied for work as a model. He opened the door and peered out at me in the dark hall. At first he said he was sorry, but he couldn't use me. He was a landscape painter, and he said he guessed I had come to the wrong man, and there was another artist of his name on Tremont Street who painted figures. Then he said:

"But come in, come in!"

He was a little man of about fifty, and his face had the chubby look of a child. He wore the funniest old-fashioned clothes. He peered up at me through his glasses, and seemed to be examining my face. After a moment he said:

"Having a hard time, eh? Or are you extra busy now?"

I told him I was not extra busy, and he rubbed his chin in a funny way and finally he said:

"I believe I can use you after all. Now I'll tell you how we'll arrange it. I'm a pretty busy man, so I can't make any definite engagement, but you come here whenever you have nothing else to do, and I'll use you if I can. If I'm too busy, I'll pay you just the same. How will that do?"

I thanked him, and told him I was so glad, for work was getting scarcer every day.

He pointed to a big armchair and said:

"Now sit down there and rest yourself. Be placid! Be placid!" He waved his hand at me, and went to see who was knocking at the door. Then he came back and said:

"Too busy" to use you to-day. Here's the



HENRY FLUTT

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"Allow me," said Mr. Snow, politely offering to help Marion button her waist—then he kissed her on the back of the neck! At that instant came Mrs. Snow's voice: "I have brought you and Miss Ascough some tea, dear!"

money," and he handed me seventy cents, as if for two hours' work.

"Oh, Mr. Rintoul," I said, "I haven't worked at all."

"Now don't argue," he said. "That was our agreement, so be placid!"

One day when I went to pose he said that all the people in the studios were giving a tea, and they had asked him to open the doors of his studio, so that the visitors could see it. He remarked that he would take that day off. I remarked:

"There must be an awful lot of artists here."

He chuckled, and making his hand into a claw, whispered:

"Not all artists, but folks hanging on to the edge of art, and cackling, cackling. Now run along, and keep placid!" and he handed me a dollar for my "time."

I never really posed for him at all, for he always had something else to do, but he would make me sit in the big armchair and be "placid."

He has now gone to the Land where all is

placid, and whenever I hear that word, I think of him, and my faith in good men is strengthened.

But not all of my experiences with the artists of Boston were as pleasant as that with Mr. Rintoul and Mr. Sands and some others. I had one terrible experience from which I barely escaped with my life.

I had posed several times for a Mr. Harper, who did a rushing business for strictly commercial firms. He made advertisements such as are seen on street-cars, packages of breakfast-food and things like that. I had posed for him in a number of positions, to show off a certain brand of stockings, as a girl playing golf, to advertise a sweater, and other things too numerous to mention here.

He was a large, powerfully built man, devoted to sports, and he used to tell me about his place at Cape Cod, and how he fished and rode. He discovered that I could paint, and he let me help him sometimes with his work. We got to be very friendly, and I really enjoyed working for

him and liked him very much. His wife was a sweet-faced, gentle little woman, who occasionally came to the studio, and she would sometimes put an extra piece of cake in his lunch-box for me. He said she was a saint.

Of all the artists I worked for my best hopes rested on Mr. Harper, for he had promised, if certain work he expected came, he might be able to employ me permanently—not merely as a model, but assisting him.

One day after I had been working for him all morning, and we had lunch together, I sat down on a couch to glance over a book of reproductions, when I felt him come up beside me. He stood there, without saying anything for a while, and then, stooping down, brushed my cheek with his hand. I was not quite sure whether he was leaning over to look at the pictures, but I did not like his face so close, and half teasingly I put up my hand and pushed his face away, as I might a fly that was in my way. Suddenly I felt a stinging slap on my face. Surprised and angry, I leaped to my feet.

"Mr. Harper, you are a little too rough!" I said. "That really hurt me."

I thought he was joking, but when I saw his face I realized that I was looking at a madman.

"I intended to hurt you," he said in the strangest voice, and then he cursed me, and struck me again on the cheek. "Take that, and that and that!" His voice rose with each blow. Then he took me by the shoulders and shook me till my breath was gone.

"Now, I'm going to kill you!" he raved.

I fell down on my knees and screamed

that I had not meant to offend him, but he caught hold of my hands and dragged me along toward the window, shouting that he was going to throw me out. We were seven stories up and he had dragged me literally on to the window-sill. I tried to brace myself for death, as all my resistance seemed nothing to his awful strength; but even while we struggled at the window the door of his studio opened and some one came in. Like a flash he turned and, dragging me across the room, he literally threw me into the hall and shut the door in my face. To this day I do not even know who had entered his studio, but I believe it was a woman, and sometimes I wonder if it could have been his wife.

In the hall I gathered myself up. My clothes were nearly torn off my back, and I was black and blue all over. My hair was down and blood was running down my chin. I climbed upstairs to another artist I had posed for, and when he opened the door to my knock he was so startled by my appearance, that he called to his wife, a sculptress, to come quickly.

"What is the matter? Whatever is the matter?" she asked, drawing me in. "You poor girl, what has happened to you?"

I could not speak at first. I tried to, but my breath was coming in gasps, and I was sobbing. For the first time in my life hysterics seized me. They chafed my hands and brought me something to drink, and then she held my hands firmly in hers,

pass, and hereafter you keep away from Mr. Harper." Her husband said:

"I'm surprised at Harper, the demanding brute. I've heard of queer doings down there, and I know he has beaten messenger-boys, but, by Jove, I didn't dream he'd beat a girl. You must have aroused his temper in some way. You know he's unbalanced—of course you know that—every one does."

No, I did not know that. He was worse than unbalanced, however. He was nothing less than a madman.

I went home bruised and sore, and, as they advised, let the matter drop. As Mrs. Wilson had said, I had no witnesses, and I was just a model!

IT was the second week in May, but as warm as summer and the flowers were all blooming in the parks. The artists were leaving Boston early that year. There seemed only a handful of them left in town. I had scarcely any engagements. Mr. Sands had left, and so had four other artists for whom I had been posing.

Mr. Rintoul, too, had gone away. I could no longer go to Mr. Harper, the man who had beaten me.

I sat in my little hall-room, reading a letter from home.

"Dear Marion" (wrote Ada): "We are all very glad to hear you are doing so well in Boston" [I had told them so], "and we hope you will come home this summer.

"Papa is not at all well and mama awfully worried. There is not much money coming in. I am doing all I can to help, and I gave up a good position offered me by the C. P. R. to travel over their Western lines and write travel pamphlets, because I will not leave mama just now.

"Charles would do more, but his wife won't let him. I think you ought to help. Ellen has been sending money regularly, but now Wallace is ill. Even Nora sends us something each week.

"I must say, Marion, that you always were the one to think only of yourself, and you always managed to have a good time. Now as you are earning money in the States, and there are so many younger ones at home, you certainly ought to send home some money. It is wicked of you not to.

"You will be sorry to hear that Daisy [the sister next to Nellie] went into the convent to be a nun last week. She simply was bent upon it, and nothing we could say or do would stop her. You know she became a convert to the Catholic faith soon after Nellie married De Rochefort. She is with the Order of the Little Sisters of Jesus, and her name is now Sister Maria Anastasia. We all feel very badly about it, as she is so young to shut herself up for life.

"Last Sunday I went for a walk as far as the Convent of Les Petites Soeurs de Jésu, and I looked over the garden fence, but I could see no sign of our Daisy. So I called: 'Daisy! Daisy!' and oh, Marion, I felt awful to think of her behind those stone walls, just like a prisoner, and I even imagined I saw her face looking out of one of the windows of the solemn, ghostly-looking convent building. It is a (Continued on page 117)



HENRY HUTCHINS





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"and anyway in Montreal that means to shoot or skate or snowshoe or toboggan. Here when you say 'sport' you mean to drink a lot of liquor. I think it's horrid." Jimmy regarded me reproachfully.

"I bet those farmers in Montreal drink their share all right," he said. "Of course, that bum Canadian village isn't really on the map at all" (he was teasing me), "but I'll bet the booze is right there. Say, do you really have cars running there? I bet you had some jay-farmer beaux all right! How about the one whose letters you're always so glad to get? You nearly fell down the stairs the other day in your hurry to get that one from Miss Darling."

I couldn't help laughing to think of Reggie being called a farmer. Jimmy took offense at my laughter.

"Say, what're you laughing about anyhow? If you don't want my company, say so, and I'll take myself off."

"Don't be silly, Jimmy. You know very well I like your company, or I wouldn't be sitting with you now."

"Then why can't you drink a glass of beer with a fellow? I bet you would if I were that Montreal chap."

"I'll drink the beer on one condition," I said, "if you'll promise not to drink any whisky to-night."

Jimmy leaned over the table.

"I'll promise you anything on earth, Marion. I'm half crazy about you anyhow."

The waiter was passing and, looking at us, he said:

"No kissing allowed."

Jimmy was on his feet.

"What the devil do you mean? Did you mean to insult this lady?"

His voice was raised and he seized that waiter by the collar. I felt ashamed and afraid. I jumped up and tried to pull Jimmy from the waiter, but he wouldn't let go.

"Please, Jimmy, for my sake, stop!" I pleaded.

The waiter was smiling a forced sort of smile, and he said:

"No insult was intended, sir."

"All right then, apologize to this lady."

The waiter did so. "And now," said Jimmy, in a very lordly way, "come along, Marion, we don't have to stay in this place. Come along."

When we got out to the street, I turned upon him and said:

"You can take me home, Jimmy Odell. I won't go into another restaurant with you. I'm not going to be disgraced again."

"Oh, all right-o!" said he sulkily. "I guess I can get all the whisky I want alone, without anyone preaching to me," and he turned around, as if to leave me. I ran after him and caught him by the arm.

"Jimmy, don't drink any more."

He tried to shake off my hand, and he said recklessly:

"What difference does it make? You don't care anything about me. You wouldn't really care if I drank myself to death."

"I would care, Jimmy. I care an awful lot about you."

Jimmy stopped short in the street.

"Do you mean that? You do care for me?" I nodded. "Very well, then," said he, "it's up to you to stop me. If you'll marry me, I'll quit the booze. That's on the level, Marion."

"Now, Jimmy, you know what I told you before, and yet you couldn't keep away from that old flask of whisky. You love it better than me. And I'm not going to marry you till I do see some real signs in you of reforming. Besides, anyway, you've got two years yet to finish at Harvard, and I guess your people would be crazy if you got married before you graduated."

"Say, who is marrying, they or me?" demanded Jimmy. "Ah, come along, like a good fellow. Here's just the joint we want," and he drew me into a chop-house on Washington Street.

No sooner was he seated at the table than he ordered two steins of beer for us, but he kept his word about the whisky. I had difficulty in drinking from the Stein, as the lid knocked my hat crooked, and this amused Jimmy vastly. He began to chuckle loudly all of a sudden, and he leaned over the table and said:

"Tell you what I'll do, Marion. My sister's giving some sort of party to-morrow night. How'd you like to go along?"

"Why, how can I? She hasn't invited me."

"Well, I guess I can bring my friends to our house if I want," declared Jimmy, as

though someone had questioned his right. "Will you, or won't you go? Yes or no?"

"W-e-l-l—"

"No well about it. Yes or no?"

"Yes."

I DIDN'T have any work at all to do the next day, so I stayed in and fixed up a pretty dress to wear to the party at Jimmy's house. He called early for me, bringing along another student named Evans, who played the guitar. We stopped for Benevento, an Italian, who played the mandolin with Evans, and whom I had met several times.

At the last moment I hesitated about going and I said:

"Maybe your mother and sister won't want me. If they knew I was a model, I'm sure they wouldn't."

"Great Scott!" burst from Jimmy, "that just proves how beautiful you are, Marion. If I were a girl, I'd be proud to say that the artists wanted me for all those fine paintings. I've not seen a magazine cover to compare with your face, Marion, and, say, my folks ought to be proud to know you, eh, Evans?"

Evans grinned, and Benevento nodded violently. It was nice to have Jimmy think so well of my "profession," and I didn't tell him that all models were not necessarily beautiful. Some of them are very ugly, but "paintable."

As we were going along in the car, Jimmy said to Evans:

"Say, Bill, you want to get next to my sister's friend, Miss Underwood. She's a fine girl, and has heaps of dough. My sisters want her for a sister-in-law, but little Jimmy has his own ideas." Turning to me, he added with a tender smile: "She can't begin to hold a candle to you, Marion."

Jimmy's people lived in a very fine house, and I felt much impressed and somewhat anxious as we passed in. His sister looked like Jimmy, and had his features, but where the tall, swinging figure and handsome face made a fine-looking man, the same type in a woman did not make beauty. She looked hard and bony. Her manner to me was of the most frigid, and I saw her give Jimmy an angry glance as he airily presented me. She kept him on one excuse or another right by her side and that of a very tall girl all evening. Benevento and Evans were soon playing for the company, and I, who had not been introduced to many of the people, found a quiet corner of the room, where I could sit unobserved and watch everyone.

I had been there some time, and Benny and Evans had given way to a girl who was singing in a high voice "The Rosary," when suddenly I heard Benevento's voice speaking in my ear:

"Miss Marion, will you permit me to call upon you?"

He was small and dark, and his hands were soft and brown. He had shining black eyes and hair that curled. He could play beautifully, the reason why the students at the boarding-house chummed with him.

I had never given Benny much thought or attention, except when he played in the room below me, where Evans roomed. I would open my door and listen to the strain of music, and sometimes Evans would call up to me to come down. One day I had been listening to them play, and when they got through joked with Benny about something. He came over and sat down beside me on the couch, and he said:

"I like-a you, Miss Marion. You look like-a my countrywoman."

Miss Marion had said to me that night:

"Be careful how you flirt with an Italian. They are pretty dangerous fire to play with."

So when, that night of the party, Benevento asked me if he might call, I thought of that and I said:

"Oh, I'll see you when you are playing in Mr. Evans's room some night."

"No," he persisted, "I like-a make special call on you. Please to permit!"

To humor him, I said:

"Oh, all right, and bring your mandolin."

He smiled at me ecstatically and said fervently:

"Me—I am coming right away, to-morrow night."

It was time to go. Most of the guests were going into the bedroom for their wraps. Nobody noticed me. So I slipped into the room where Jimmy had taken me upon my arrival there. It was his mother's bed, but she was away at their country place. I noticed on the bed a black-straw hat with a steel buckle holding the severe bit of plumage, and I thought to myself that it was probably his mother's

hat, for no one else had put their wraps in this room. I was putting on my own hat at the mirror when I heard someone say:

"Shh! Shh!"

I turned around, and there was Jimmy in the doorway. He was whispering with his hand to his mouth.

"Marion, say good-night to my sister quickly and then sneak away. I'll be waiting on the porch."

So I found my way back to where his sister and a number of guests were, and I wished them good-night and thanked Miss Odell for the lovely time I had not had.

"Good-night," she returned coldly, "your friend Mr. Benevento will see you home." Then she turned to the girl at her side: "Jimmy will be delighted to take you home, dear. He is still in the upper room."

I felt like saying: "He is waiting for me!"

As we walked home, Jimmy said:

"I couldn't get away from sis. Gad! that friend of hers may be handsome, but I hate handsome horses. I like a little pony like you, Marion."

"Don't you think I'm handsome then?" I asked mischievously.

"Not in a long shot. You are the most kissable—little——"

"Jimmy, behave yourself. Look at that policeman watching us, and don't forget that waiter."

"Oh, hang policemen and waiters," growled Jimmy. "What the devil do they know about kisses?"

"When you want to kiss me, Jimmy Odell," I said, "you'll have to come without that whisky odor on your breath."

"Oh, all right-o!" said Jimmy. "I guess there are others won't mind it."

"No, I guess not," I sniffed. "Horses haven't much smelling sense."

THERE was a rap on my door. I opened it, and there was Benevento. He had on a black suit. It looked like the suits the poor French Canadians dress their dead in. He had plastered his hair so sleekly that it shone like a piece of black satin, and oh! he did smell of barber's soap and perfume. His big black eyes were shining and he was smiling all over his face.

"Where is your mandolin?" I asked.

"I have called to see you," he answered. "Me, I am not musician to-night." When he saw my evident disappointment, he said: "But if I am not welcome for myself, I can go."

I felt really sorry for him, as his smiling face had become so suddenly mournful and sorry looking. So I said:

"Oh, I'm really glad to see you," and I tried to smile as if I were. He came to me with a kind of rush and said excitedly:

"Marion, I love-a you! I love-a you! I love-a you! Give me the smile again. That smile is like-a music to me. I love-a you!"

I was amazed and also alarmed.

"Mr. Benevento," I said, backing away from him, "please go away."

I thought of what Miss Darling had said, that Italian men were not to be played with. I had merely smiled at Benny, with what a volcanic result! He was coming nearer and nearer to me, and he kept talking all the time, in his soft, pleading way:

"Marion, I have-a love-a you from the first day I have-a look at you. You look-a like my countrywomen, Marion. We will getta married. Soon I will make plenty money. We will have maybe little house and little Webbey."

I could stand it no longer. He was only a boy after all, and somehow he made me think of the little beggar-boy I had pinched when I gave him the bread and sugar. I pushed him away from me, and I said:

"Don't talk such foolishness. I am old enough to be your mother." I think I was about three years older than he.

"No matter, Marion," he said, "no matter. I do not care if you are so old. I love-a you just same."

I was sidling round along the wall, and now I had reached the door. I ran down the stairs, and I did not stop till I reached the safety of Miss Darling's room.

"What on earth is the matter?" she cried, as I burst in.

Between laughter and tears I repeated the interview. She couldn't help laughing with me, especially when I told about the part of "the little Webbey." Then she said:

"Well, we'll get him out now, but you must never flirt with an Italian. You're apt to be killed if you do."

("Marion's" further experiences as a modern interest and amuse you in the September Hearst's.)