

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 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. Next 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 fulfil his promise,—particularly as he objects to her seeing any other men. She goes to Boston and there becomes a full-fledged model, with some weird experiences.

LATER in the evening Jimmy Boyd came. He was very quiet and queer for Jimmy, and he sat down on my window-sill, and held his head in his hands. When I told him about Benevenuto, he looked up and said:

"The cheeky little rat. I'll throw him out of the window."

After a moment he said: "Come over here, Marion, I want to tell you something." So I went and sat down on the opposite side of the window-seat.

"Say, Marion, there's a big row going on up at my house about you. Sis kicked up an awful fuss, and they're all on to my coming to see you. She declares I insulted her friend, because I took you home instead, and mother is mad, too. They make me sick. Mother asked me where your folks lived, and what you were living alone like this for. I told them that you were a hard little worker, and then they wanted to know what you did, and I told them you were a model, and that I was proud of it, but gosh! You ought to have heard those women! When I told them that, they almost burst themselves mouthing about it. I turned on 'em and told them not one of them could be a model. They didn't have the looks. But the long and short of it is that mother has telegraphed for dad, and she says she won't give me another cent unless I promise to give you up. As I needed a ten-spot I said I would, but you better believe I'm not going to do it."

I stood up and put my hand on Jimmy's shoulder. Somehow I felt older than Jimmy, though we were about of an age. He seemed such a boy, so wayward and reckless, and there was so much that was lovable about him, despite his "toughness." "Jimmy dear," I said, "I guess your mother's right. You'd better give me up. It'll only make trouble for you if you keep on coming to see me."

"Tell you what I'll do," said Jimmy. "I'll quit college, and get a job of some sort. Then I'll be independent, and I'll come to see you all I please, and I'm going to marry you whether they want me to or not."

I thought of Jimmy's happy-go-lucky nature and his love for drink, and I determined the poor fellow should not lose the help of his family if I could avoid it. We took a little walk around the block, I urging Jimmy all the time to please do what his people wished, and I even told him that while I was fond of him I did not love him. He said savagely that he guessed I had left my heart in Montreal, and then he pulled his cap down over his eyes, and didn't say anything for a long time. We just tramped around, and then Jimmy said suddenly:

"Say, Marion, why doesn't he come on here and marry you if he loves you? Is it lack of money prevents him?"

I said: "I don't want to marry him. That's the reason why." How I wished that was the truth!

"Well, say, girlie, let's you and I get married on the q. t. Then I'll go West, as they're talking of shunting me out there, and as soon as I've made good you can join me. How's that for a scheme?"

"It sounds pretty nice, Jimmy, but I'd rather do the marrying after you've made good."

"Oh, it'll be dead easy," declared Jimmy. "I've an uncle out there with a ranch as big as a whole county. It'll just be like dropping into a soft snap, don't you see?"

I sighed. "Making good isn't merely dropping into soft snaps, Jimmy," I said sadly.

Jimmy suddenly whistled under his breath, and I saw him looking at a couple of women who were coming toward us. He raised his cap as they passed us, but although the younger one returned his bow, the older one



HENRY HUTT

"I was posing in gipsy costume for three women amateurs," says Marion, "and they talked to me occasionally in a patronizing way as though I were a little poodle!"

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stared at him indignantly, and then she gave me a very severe and condemning glance. All of a sudden I knew who that woman was. I recognized her by her hat. She was Jimmy's mother!

The following day I had a letter from her. She said I was ruining her son's future, and if I did not give him up he would soon be without even a home. She said that he was in serious trouble with his father and that the latter intended to send him out West, and that she hoped I would do nothing to prevent her son from going. Finally she said that if her son were to marry a model the family would never forgive him and that such a disgrace would break all of their hearts, besides ruining him.

I did not answer her letter.

ISAT for a very long time thinking about my life. What was there wrong about being a model that society should have cast the bar sinister upon it? Surely there was no disgrace in one who had beauty having that beauty transferred to canvas. I had long ago ceased to despise the profession myself. The more I posed the more I felt even a sort of pride in my work, though I still felt one was "beyond the pale" when one posed undraped.

Miss Darling knocked at my door, and brought in a telegram. I thought at first it was from Reggie—that he was at last coming, as he had been threatening in all of his letters to do, and my hands were trembling when I broke the flap. But it was from poor Jimmy—Jimmy *en route* to Colorado, entreating me to write to him and assuring me that he never would forget his "own little Marion," and that he would "make good" and I'd be proud of him yet. I sat down to write an impulsive answer to the boy, and then my eye fell upon his mother's letter. No! I would not ruin her son's life. Jimmy should have his opportunity, but I said to myself with a choking sob:

"And if Jimmy ever does make good, they'll have *me* to thank for it, even if I am an artist's model!"

JUNE had come and I was filling the last of my engagements. There was not a single other date in my calendar for the week, and it was Wednesday. I had filled only two engagements the week before.

I was posing for three women. The work was easy, as they were amateurs and liked to meet together and use the same



Marion fairly hated those intently-gazing students; they were looking at her, she thought, like cruel tormentors. Hastily she flung the drapery around her and ran for the screen, shouting: "Oh, you fiends, you beasts! You shall not torment me any more!"

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buildings, and had decided I was the type for this particular work. As he said the work would last all summer I was delighted, and I thanked him fervently. Then he said:

"Suppose we have a little supper together somewhere."

I was awfully sorry, but I had promised to help Miss St. Denis fix a waist she was making. So I told this man I could not disappoint my friend. He said: "As you please, then," and was going, when I asked for his address. He stopped and thought a moment, and then wrote something on a slip of paper and handed it to me. He told me to come to work at ten the following morning, and, bowing, went. The address was in Brookline, and as it was some distance out I planned to start early to be sure to be there in time. After the man had gone all my lassitude vanished. I felt like dancing and screaming, I was so relieved and happy. Here I was engaged for six hours' work a day for all of the summer. I rushed over to tell the good news to Rose St. Denis. She said:

"I tink it is too good to be true. It looks too easy. I tink he will want the model to pose undraped, ha! You will not do so yet?" As I shook my head, she said with a nod: "You will make very poor living if you don't do so, *mon enfant*. The artists have not enough to keep one model in work in ze costume, and then there is so many doing the same ting. Every girl—even ze frien' of ze artist, she will pose in ze costume. The model cannot get enough work to keep her,



Rose St. Denis drew her knees up in the bed and regarded Marion with the tolerant glance of a wise young mother. "Tell him you are one professional model, that you are frien' to Miss St. Denis, and will tek her place."

so. Soon my Alfred he will come from France and we will marry. Then, *enfant*, ah! we will be happy like cheeldren."

Somehow, when she was speaking, this model who posed so freely looked like the Virgin Mary, and I put my arms around her and kissed her. She said:

"Pauvre enfant! Me? I know eet is hard for you! I have ze pity for you; but dat will not put ze food in ze stomach! Non! Soon you will see!"

I awoke happily next morning. I was going to start at good steady work. Now, I thought, I would pay back Lu Frazer all I owed her, and I'd send mama money every week, and Reggie's letters should go unanswered. He had written me saying that he was coming soon to Boston to bring me home, unless I returned myself. And I thought I would buy myself a new hat and trim it with violets.

I went into the basement dining-room to get my breakfast, and the landlady put a bill at my plate. It was for three dollars for meals I had had. I told her I would pay her in a few days.

I had exactly five cents in my pocketbook when I started for Brookline, but I intended to ask the artist to pay me a little in advance. They often did that, and as I was to have steady work I was sure he would not object. I could not help thinking of a remark of my father's, that something always "turned up" and I felt that something had come in the nick of time.

It was three-quarters of an hour's ride to the street in Brookline he had marked on the slip. I got off at last, and walked down the street look-

ing at the numbers. I went up and down twice, but I could find no such address. I went to nearly every second house on the street, but no one knew the name I inquired for, and the clerk in the drug-store where I also inquired said there was no such man in the vicinity. Again and again I looked, and then a sick sense of apprehension stole over me, and I began to realize that I was the victim of some cruel hoax.

"What in heaven's name was I to do? I had no carfare even, and it was too far to walk. I wandered about distractedly, and then I finally resolved to get on the car, and when the conductor should ask for my fare, I would pretend I had lost it. Then I thought, "even if he puts me off, I will be that much nearer home, and I will try another car."

So I got on a car, but I suffered the shame of a cheat when the conductor finally came up to see me, and I almost cried as I pretended to search through my empty pocketbook. Then I heard the conductor's voice. He was a big, red-faced Irishman, with freckles on his face, and he grinned down at me:

"Aw, dat's all right, kid!" he said, and taking a nickel from his own pocket, he rang up my fare. When I was getting off, I said:

"Thank you! I'll send it back to you, if you give me your name."

He laughed. "Dat's all right, kid," he said, and then leaning to my ear he added: "Say, do you want another nickel, sissy?"

I borrowed a dollar from Evans, the student who was a friend of Jimmy's. I bought the morning papers, and scanned the (Continued on page 190)

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MARION

(Continued from page 157)

columns of advertisements. I was determined to look for some other kind of work, yet I realized that I was a "Jack-of-all-trades and master of none," unless it be that of the model. I found one advertisement that seemed to be pretty good:

"Wanted: A smart, pretty young lady for light, easy work. Experience not necessary."

I started down to answer that advertisement at once. The address was in the old building on Washington Street and there seemed to be all kinds of businesses carried on there. On the door of the place I was to apply was some name, and the word "Massage." I had a dim idea what massage meant. I associated it in some way in my mind with illness. I pushed the bell, and the door was quickly opened. A stout, matronly woman stood smiling at me.

"Come in, dearie," she said, as though she were expecting me.

I found myself in a room that looked like the average boarding-house parlor. It was stuffy and dark. The woman sat herself down in a rocker, and she was still smiling at me.

"I came in answer to the advertisement. What do you require me to do?"

Patting me on the arm, she said:

"Easy, easy, dear. Don't talk so loud. It is massage work, dearie."

"I can't do it," I said, "but I might be able to learn."

She kept on grinning and winking at me, and I didn't know why. I suddenly felt terribly afraid of her. I said tremulously:

"Will I have to wear aprons?"

She got out of the rocking-chair and poked me in the side.

"Now, dearie, if you are really a good girl, I don't want you to come at all. I'd rather have a young married lady. I had a sweet little married lady before, but her husband got on to us and—"

I had begun to back toward the door, and with my hand behind me I found the knob. I ran out into the hall, and down those stairs as quickly as I could get. Oh, how good the air did seem when I found myself at last on the street.

When I got to my room, I found a note on my table. It was from Miss Darling, and was as follows:

Dear Miss Marion:

"I don't want to press you, but could you let me have the rent? I would not bother you, but I have expenses to meet, and even if you could let me have a part if you cannot let me have it all, I would be obliged."

C. DARLING."

There was a letter, too, from Reggie. I opened it with my hatpin and oh! I think if I could have pierced Reggie instead of that letter, just then, I would have liked to do it.

Darling Girlie:

"I met your sister Ada on the street, and she tells me you are doing awfully well in Boston with your painting. I hope, however, you are not forgetting your old sweetheart. Ada tells me you are coming home this summer. Darling, I shall try to arrange to go to Boston, and we will come back to Montreal together. I am longing for the moment when I can hold my own little Marion in my arms again, and tell her how much I love her."

"Everything's going my way lately, and I'll see you a Q. C. before many years have passed. Your own, REGGIE."

Somehow I blamed Reggie for all I had suffered, and as I stared out at the darkening night descending upon the streets, I muttered to myself:

"Now it is your fault that I am compelled to pose in the way I hate!"

It had come to this at last. There was nothing else for me to do, and Miss Darling must be paid. She had been so good to me.

As I went out, I knocked at Miss Darling's door. She put out her head and I said:

"Dear Miss Darling, it's all right. I'm going to pay you in a few days."

She said: "All right, dear, I know you will keep your word."

Yes, I would keep my word! I was on my way to Miss St. Denis to tell her what I was now willing to do. I found her in, but

she was not feeling well. She had been posing at a class the previous night, she told me, and also three hours in the afternoon.

"See my feet," she said, thrusting them out, "Mon Dieu! they are so sick. All ze night I have put me some vaseline and it is no good. They are all grown beeg again."

Her poor bare feet were badly swollen. I begged her to let me bathe them in hot water. Mama always bathed our feet in hot water when we had colds or our feet hurt.

"Bien!" she said. "Do so, enfant, if you wish, but it is so hard to get hot water in zese boarding-house. Ah! very soon I will have dat little house of all my own, and den, you will see, enfant, what it is to be *tres* happy!"

She sighed, as if she were inexpressibly tired, and lay there with her dark eyes closed, and her beautiful soft dark hair all about her lovely face, and I thought to myself again: "She looks like a picture of the Virgin," and I felt sure that although she was just a poor model, she was pure and good like the Virgin. She opened her eyes after a moment and smiled at me, and she said:

"When I have my little house, enfant, then always ze water will be hot. There will be ze gas on ze stove, and it will give heat flame, and me. I will have plenty for heat my water. Here, me, I stand and hold for eternity ze little pot to make some water hot on ze little gas-jet. It is all stuff up!" and she closed her eyes again.

"Wait a minute," I said: "I'll go and ask your landlady for hot water."

I found my way down to the basement, and very politely I said to the landlady:

"Miss St. Denis has a very bad foot. Will you be so kind as to let me have a pitcher of hot water?" She snapped back at me: "I guess I give my roomers more hot water than they pay for. Does she think she is paying hotel prices?"

In a begrudging manner she poured me out half a pitcher full from the kettle on the range. Thanking her, I started to carry it up, but a loose piece of carpet at the foot of the stairs caught my feet. I slipped and all my precious hot water was lost. The landlady had picked up the pitcher, which fortunately was not broken, and when she saw me crying she began to laugh uproariously, and seemed to be suddenly good-natured, for she refilled the pitcher.

I bathed Rose St. Denis' feet, and made her comfortable, and she thanked me sweetly and seemed to be grateful. I sat beside her bed for awhile, smoothing her forehead. She was not really ill, just tired out. Presently I said:

"Now the time has come for me to pose as you do, or as you say, starve or go to the devil."

She opened her eyes with a start, and she said: "Merci! But you do say things so suddenly, enfant. You are funniest girl. You say some time ze ting I would not dare to speak, or if I did I would have to confess to my priest; and den you are afraid to do some tings zat is nutting wrong, and you meek one beeg fuss for dat."

She sat up in the bed, with her knees drawn up, and regarded me with the benignant, tolerant glance of a young wise mother. She could understand my viewpoint in regard to posing unframed, but she believed I was simply wrong and my stubbornness in the matter had always puzzled her. She did not waste any time on pitying me now. On the contrary she urged me to do the work.

"Now you have come," she said, "at a very good time for me. I am not able to go to dat night class, and I have made engagement for all dis week. You will take my place, voilà! First you will go to ze master of ze school, and you will tell him you have pose bi-fore, dat you have ze belle figure—yes, you must say dat. If necessary you will show him." As I shook my head, she nodded at me and said: "Yes, yes, you will do dat, if necessary. Mebbe he will not require. You must not tell him that you have not pose bi-fore in dat alto gedder. He will think you 'greenhorn,' as you say, den. Tell him you are one professional model, and dat you are fren' to Rose St. Denis, and dat you will tek my place. I tink he will be satisfy. You look liddle bit like me. Like you are liddle sister to me. Yes, dat is so."

She patted my hand, smiling comfortingly at me. Then she went on with her instruc-

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"No—no—I am through forever!"

I was all dressed. Oh, my beloved clothes! The teacher was now thoroughly provoked.

"What do you mean by taking an engagement and wasting our time like this?"

"I don't know," I answered, and I ran out of the room.

I owe an apology to that class.

WE were all sitting around the big hall stove, and papa said:

"Put your feet on the fender, Marion, and get them warm."

Mama was feeding me with a big spoon of ice-cream, which Reggie tried to snatch away, and then he would throw red-hot coals in my face. Screaming:

"Reggie! Reggie! Stop! Stop!" I woke up.

A man was sitting by the bed in my little room, and he was holding my wrist. I recognized him as a young doctor who had attended Miss Darling when she had the grippe. He had straight blond hair and a gentle expression. Standing by him was the girl who had taken the big room on the first floor a few days before. I had noticed her, because she dressed so well and had so many visitors. Now she was holding some ice on my head, and I heard her say to the doctor that she had just put a hot-water bag on my feet. She was not beautiful, like Rose St. Denis, for she was short and stout, but she had a large, generous mouth, and when she laughed she showed the most beautiful teeth, and she laughed a great deal, so that one could not help liking her. "How is she, doctor?" she asked, and he replied:

"She ought to stay in bed some time. Her temperature is a hundred and five. I'm afraid of her being left alone. Has she no one to take care of her?"

"No, no," I moaned weakly. "I have nobody. They are all dead."

"Who was that? Reggie? I were calling for?" asked the girl, and I said:

"He's dead, too."

My eyes felt very heavy, and I could not keep them open, I heard their voices as if in a dream.

"My! but she gave us a scare," said the girl. "We were just going out of the front door last night, to get a bite of supper over at the Plaza, and as we opened the door she was coming up the front steps, and she suddenly threw out her hands as if she were drowning, and would have fallen down the stairs, had not Al caught her."

There was a long silence, and then I heard her voice again—she was stroking my hand.

"Poor girl! What a pretty little thing she is!"

I put my cheek against her hand. Some how it seemed to me natural that she should be good and kind to me. Then the doctor said:

"I will have her moved to the hospital. This room is too small, and she will need the best of care."

"Why can't I care for her?" asked the girl suddenly. "I can do it! Oh, you don't believe me, eh?" I heard them both laugh, and she said:

"It'll be lots of fun. To begin with, you carry her down to my room."

"Do you really mean that?" I heard him ask, and her reply: "Why, of course I do."

I did not say a word. I did not care much what they did to me, and there seemed to me no reason why I should not be cared for by this stranger. I suppose it was my weakness, but perhaps it was the consciousness that I would have done the same in her place. Poor girls instinctively depend upon each other in crises like these. And then this girl—Lois Barret was her name—had a jolly way that made even the most trying service seem like a game to her. She acted as if she really enjoyed doing something that another person would have considered a trial. She kept saying:

"It'll be all kinds of fun. Come along, doctor, let's get her right down now. Can you do it?"

"Easily," declared the doctor.

"Ah!" said she, "It's fine to have big broad shoulders. I wish I were a man—like you." She added the last two words softly, and the doctor chuckled. They wrapped the blankets around me, and the doctor lifted me up in his arms and carried me down

the stairs. I was so weak that even this slight movement affected me, and I fainted.

I must have been even worse than the doctor thought, for I did not know anything more for a long time; then, one day, I opened my heavy eyes, to find myself in a big sunny room, and dreamily I watched Lois Barret hovering over me like a ministering angel. Then, in the evening, I have a dim remembrance of the doctor standing in the window, and putting his arm around Lois, and it seemed to me he was kissing her. I called:

"Oh, I am not asleep. I can see you."

They both laughed, and Lois came over and gave me something to swallow, and as I dropped asleep they seemed to grow into one person.

"Lois, are you in love with Doctor Squires?"

She burst out laughing.

"I'm in love with everybody and everything. Here, lie back there."

I was to sit up in bed that afternoon, and the following day in a chair. I had been ill two weeks.

"Now," said Lois, "I have to go down-town on some business, and I'll be gone two hours. If you want anything just knock on the wall with this," giving me a brush, "and Billy Boyd in the next room will come in, and if it's something he can't do himself he'll call Miss Darling."

She kissed me, and looking fresh and radiant she went on out.

Billy Boyd roomed with a friend in the next room to Lois. His room-mate was a clerk in a department-store, and Billy was a cable operator. He worked at night. Reggie would have called these boys "common Yankees." I knew how much better and in every way superior they were to Reggie, whose grandfather was a duke or something like that. These boys would run errands for Lois if she knocked on their wall for help, and when I was most sick and helpless Billy even came in and helped Lois when it was necessary to lift me. Lois treated them as if they were girls, and they treated her as if she was a boy. It was a revelation to me, as in Canada and in Europe the simple friendship between men and women is not known as in the United States.

Then there was big Tim O'Leary. He was bartender in a nearby hotel. He had a room in the basement of what had once been the dining-room. He used to knock at the door and ask in his big voice, which sounded for all the world like a foghorn:

"How's the little Canadian girl?"

He would send over the waiters from the hotel where he worked with all sorts of stuff that a sick person was not allowed to eat, big platters of lobster salads, chicken salads, club sandwiches, wine and beer. Lois told him I could only have a little broth, and then Tim sent over a big pitcher of rich soup. Lois tasted it, and then fed a spoonful of it to the doctor, and they both laughed. Then she went to the boys' room and knocked, and they were glad to get the good stuff.

Tim was a man of immense stature, and he would tell us all kinds of stories of his experiences when he was a coalheaver in New York and the fights he got into, and the times he was arrested, and always got off with a light fine. Dr. Squires called him a "rough diamond," and, much-sought-after society man as Doctor Squires was, he liked to go off with Tim O'Leary, and have a drink and "chin" together. I did admire the doctor for that, and I remembered how Reggie had been ashamed and angry with me because I had spoken to the conductor on the train.

There was a knock at the door, and when I called "Come in," the door was cautiously and softly opened, and Tim thrust in an inquiring face.

"How's yourself?" he inquired, in a big whisper.

"I'm very well, thank you, Mr. O'Leary."

"And Miss Barret, how's herself?"

"Oh, she's well too. She had to go out for a couple of hours."

"Sure, then, I'll stay and take care of you meself," said Tim. "I'm dead tired. Standing behind a bar is hard on the feet; so if you don't mind, I'll be taking off my shoes and stretch meself out for a rest."

I assured him I would be very glad to have him do it. The big man worked sometimes ten and twelve hours at a stretch, and it was so quiet and peaceful in this room. I felt the rest would do him good, just as it was doing me.

So Tim stretched himself out on the couch, with his shoes off, and fell asleep.

(New York is the Mecca of many an artist, and thence Marion flies from Boston, with better luck, as related in the October issue of Hearst's.)

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