

THE REAL ADVENTURE

By HENRY KITCHELL WEBSTER

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ROSE GETS A JOB AS CHORUS GIRL IN A MUSICAL SHOW BUT THE TEST SHE HAS TO UNDERGO IS SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSING

Synopsis.—Rose Stanton, a young woman living in modest circumstances, marries wealthy Rodney Aldrich and for more than a year lives in luxury and laziness. This life disgusts her. She hopes that when her baby comes, the job of being a mother will keep her busy and happy. But she has twins and their care is put into the hands of a trained nurse. Intense dissatisfaction with the useless life of luxury returns to Rose. She determines to go out and earn her living, to make good on her own hook. She and Rodney have some bitter scenes wrangling over this so-called whim. Rose leaves home, however, moves into a cheap rooming-house district and gets a job in a theater.

CHAPTER XVI—Continued.

"What professional experience have you had?" he asked.
"I haven't had any."
"He almost smiled when she stopped there. "Any amateur experience?" he inquired.
"Quite a lot," said Rose; "pageants and things, and two or three little plays."

"Can you dance?"
"Yes," said Rose.
He said he supposed ballroom dancing was what she meant, whereupon she told him she was a pretty good ballroom dancer, but that it was gymnastic dancing she had in mind.
"All right," he said. "See if you can do this. Watch me, and then imitate me exactly."

In the intensity of her absorption in his questions and her own answers to them, she had never given a thought to the bystanders. But now as they fell back to give him room, she swept a glance across their faces. They all wore smiles of sorts. There was something amusing about this—something out of the regular routine. A little knot of chorus girls halted in the act of going out the wide doors, and stood watching. Was it just a hoax? The suppressed, unnatural silence sounded like it. But at what John Galbraith did, one of the bystanders guffawed outright.

It wasn't pretty, the dance step he executed—a sort of stiff-legged skip accompanied by a vulgar hip wriggle and concluding with a straight-out sidewise kick. A sick disgust clutched at Rose as she watched—an utter revulsion from the whole loathly business.

"Well?" he asked, turning to her as he finished. He wasn't smiling at all.
"I'm not dressed to do that," she said.

"I know you're not," he admitted coolly; "but it can be done. Pick up your skirts and do it as you are—if you really want a job."

There was just a faint edge of contempt in that last phrase and, mercifully, it passed her anger. A blaze kindled in her blue eyes, and two spots of vivid color defined themselves in her cheeks.

She caught up her skirts as he had told her to do, executed without compromise the stiff-legged skip and the wriggle, and finished with a horizontal, sidewise kick that matched his own. Then, panting, trembling a little, she stood looking straight into his face.

Galbraith was staring at her with a look which expressed, at first, clear astonishment but gradually complicated itself with other emotions—confusion, a glint of whimsical amusement. That gleam, a perfectly honest, kindly one, decided Rose to take him on trust. He wasn't a brute, however it might suit his purpose to act like one.

"We've been rehearsing this piece two weeks," he said presently, looking away from her when he began to talk, "and I couldn't take anyone into the chorus now whom I'd have to teach the rudiments of dancing to. That's why a test was necessary. Also, I couldn't take anybody who had come down here—for a lark."

With that, Rose understood the whole thing. John Galbraith had classified her, or thought he had, as a well-bred young girl who, in a moment of pique or mischief, had decided it would be fun to go on the stage. The test he had applied wasn't, from that point of view, unnecessarily cruel. The girl he had taken her for would, on being ordered to repeat the grotesque bit of vulgarity of his, have drawn her dignity about her like a cloak and gone back in a chastened spirit to the world where she belonged.

A gorgeous apparition came sweeping by them just now, on a line from the dressing room to the door—a figure that, with regal deliberation, was closing a blue broadcloth coat, trimmed with sable, over an authentic Callot frock. The georgette had on top of it was one that Rose had last seen in a Michigan avenue shop. It had found its proper buyer—fulfilled its destiny.

"Oh, Grant!" said John Galbraith. The quickly creature stopped short and Rose recognized her with a jump as the sulky chorus girl.

Galbraith walked over to her. "I shouldn't need you any more, Grant." He spoke in a quiet, impersonal sort of way, but his voice had, as always, a good deal of carrying power. "It's hardly worth your while trying to work, I suppose, when you're as prosperous as this. And it isn't worth my while to have you soldiering. You needn't report again."

He nodded, not unamiably, and turned away. She glared after him and called out in a hoarse, throaty voice, "Thank my stars I don't have to work for you."

He'd come back to Rose again by this time, and she saw him smile. "When you do it," he said over his shoulder, "thank them for me too." Then to Rose: "She's a valuable girl; I'm giving you her place because she won't get down to business. I'd rather have a green recruit who will. The next rehearsal is at a quarter to eight tonight. Give your name and address to Mr. Quan before you go. By the way, what is your name?"

"Rose Stanton," she said. "But . . ."

She had to follow him a step or two because he had already turned away. "But may I give some other name than that to Mr. Quan?"

He frowned a little dubiously and asked her how old she was. And even when she told him twenty-two, he didn't look altogether reassured.

"That's the truth, is it? I mean, there's nobody who can come down here about three days before we open and call me, a kidnaper, and lead you away by the ear?"

"No," said Rose gravely, "there's no one who'll do that."

"Very well," he said. "Tell Quan any name you like."

She was a pale-haired girl, whom Rose thought she had heard addressed as Larson.

Rose made a surprising discovery when, with a friendly pat on the sofa beside her, for an invitation to sit down, the girl began answering her question. She was a real beauty. Only you had to look twice at her to perceive that this was so; and what she lacked was just the unanalyzable quality that makes one look twice.

"I don't know what you should worry about any of that stuff for," she said. "How you sing or what you sing don't make much difference."

Rose admitted that it didn't seem to. "But you see," she said (she hadn't had a human soul to talk to for more than a week, and she had to make a friend of somebody), "you see I've just got to keep this job. And if every little helps, as they say, perhaps that would."

The girl looked at her oddly, almost suspiciously, as if for a moment she doubted whether Rose had spoken in good faith. "You've got as good a chance of losing your job," she said, "as Galbraith has of losing his. Dave tells me Galbraith's going to put you with us in the sextette."

Dave was the thickest pianist, whom Rose had found in the highest degree obnoxious. His announcement was entitled to consideration, even though it couldn't be banked upon. There were three mediums and three big girls in the sextette (Edna Larson was one of the mediums, and so needn't fear replacement by Rose, who was a big girl). Besides appearing in two numbers as a background to one of the principals, they had one all to themselves, a fact which constituted them a sort of super-chorus.

But the intimation that Rose was to be promoted to this select inner circle, didn't, as it first came to her, give her any pleasure. Somehow, as Larson told her about it, she could fairly see the knowing, greasy grin that would have been Dave's comment on this prophecy. And in the same flash, she interpreted the Larson girl's look, half incredulous, half satirical.

"I haven't heard anything about being put in the sextette," she said quickly, "and I don't believe I will be."

"Well, I don't know why not." There was a new warmth in the medium's voice. Rose had won a victory here, and she knew it. "You've got the looks and the shape; you can dance better than any of the big girls, or us mediums, either. And if he doesn't put that big Benedict lemon into the back line where she belongs, and give you her place in the sextette, it will be because he's afraid of her drag."

Rose forbore to inquire into the nature of the Benedict girl's drag. Whatever it may have been, John Galbraith was evidently not afraid of it, because as he dismissed that very rehearsal, calling the rest of the chorus for twelve the following morning, and the sextette for eleven, he told Rose to report at the earlier hour.

The chorus was probably unanimous in its view of this promotion. When Grant came back and ate her humble pie in vain, and later, when Benedict was relegated to a place in the back line, the natural explanation was that Galbraith was crazy about the new girl. The only way she had of refuting the assumption would be by making good so intensely that they'd be compelled to see that her promotion had been inevitable.

It was in this spirit, with blazing cheeks and eyes, that she attacked the next morning's rehearsal. At its end Galbraith said to her: "You're doing very well indeed, Dane. If I could have caught you ten years ago I could have made a dancer of you."

It was a very real, unqualified compliment, and as such Rose understood it. Because, by a dancer, he meant something very different from a prancing chorus girl. The others giggled and exchanged glances with Dave at the piano. They didn't understand. To them, the compliment seemed to have been delivered with the left hand. And somehow, an amused recognition of the fact that they didn't understand, as well as of the fact that she did, flashed across from John Galbraith's eyes to hers.

The impetus and direction of Rose's career derived from two incidents which might just as well not have happened—two of the flukiest of small chances.

The first of these chances concerned itself with Edna Larson and her bad voice. It was a bad voice only when she talked. When she sang it had a gorgeous, thrilling ring, and volume enough for four. Besides, she had an infallible ear and sang squarely in tune. But when she spoke it sounded like someone who didn't know how, trying to play the slide trombone. She was simply deaf, it seemed, to the subtleties of inflection.

Daily, she reduced Galbraith to helpless wrath. Evidently he didn't mean to be a brute about it. He began every one of his tussles to improve her reading of a line with a gentleness that would have done credit to a kindergarten. But after three attempts, each more ominously gentle than the last, his temper would suddenly fly all to pieces.

The girl, queerly, didn't seem to care. But in the dressing room one night, after one of these rehearsals, Rose got a different view. As she sat down on a bench to unlace her shoes, she looked straight into Edna Larson's face—a face sunken with a despair that turned Rose cold. The tearless, tragic eyes were staring, without recognition, straight into Rose's own.

Rose delayed her dressing till the other girls were gone, then sat down beside Edna.

"You're all right," she said, feeling very inadequate. "I'm going to help you."

"It's always like this," the girl said. "It's no use. He'll put me back in the chorus again."

"Not if I can help it," Rose said. "But the first thing to do is to come along and get something to eat."

During the next hour Rose learned, for the first time, what the weight of an immense melancholy inertia can be. The girl was like one paralyzed—paralyzed by repeated failures and disasters, of which she told Rose freely. When Galbraith had put her into the sextette, a hope, just about dead, had been reawakened. She'd learned to dance well enough to escape, and she'd seen for herself how indispensable her singing voice was to the sextette. And then it had appeared she'd have to talk! And her talking wasn't right.

"Look here!" said Rose, when the story was told. (This was across the table in a dingy little lunch room.) "You're going to say your lines before tomorrow's rehearsal so that Galbraith won't stop you once. We're going to my room now, and I'm going to teach you. Come along."

In a sort of daze, the girl went. Rose put her into a chair, sat down opposite her, took the first phrase of her first speech, and said it very slowly, very quietly, half a dozen times. That was at half-past eleven o'clock at night. By midnight, Edna could say those first three words to Rose's satisfaction. They worked like that straight through the night, except that two or three times the girl broke down; said it was hopeless. She got up once and said that she was going home, whereupon Rose locked the door and put the key in her stocking.

At seven o'clock in the morning they went back to the lunch room and ate an enormous breakfast; then Rose walked Edna out to the park and back, and at eight they were up in her room again. They raided the delicatessen at eleven, and made a slender meal. And at twelve, husky of voice, but indomitable of mind—Edna at last, as well as Rose—they confronted Galbraith.

When the test scene came, Rose could hardly manage her own first line, and drew a sharp look of inquiry from Galbraith. But on Edna's first cue, her line was spoken with no hesitation at all, and in tone, pitch, and inflection it was almost a phonographic copy of the voice that had served it for a model.

There was a solid two seconds of silence.

When the rehearsal was over Galbraith called Edna out to him and allowed himself a long, incredulous stare at her. "Will you tell me, Larson," he asked, "why in the name of heaven, if you could do that, you didn't do it yesterday?"

"I couldn't do it yesterday," she said. "Dane taught me."

"Taught you!" he echoed. "Dane!" he called to Rose, who had been watching a little anxiously. "Larson tells me you taught her. How did you do it?"

"Why, I just—taught her," said Rose. "I showed her how I said each line, and I kept on showing her until she could do it."

"How long did it take you—all night?"

"All the time there was since last rehearsal," said Rose, "except for three meals."

"Ye gods!" said Galbraith. "Well, live and learn. Look here! Will you teach the others—the other four in the sextette? I'll see you're paid for it."

"Why, yes—of course," said Rose, hesitating a little.

"Oh, I don't mean overnight," he said. "But mornings—between rehearsals—whenever you can."

"I wasn't thinking of that," said Rose. "I was just wondering if they'd want to be taught—I mean, by another chorus girl, you know."

"They'll want to be taught if they want to keep their jobs," said Galbraith. And then, to her astonishment—and also perhaps to his, for the thing was radically out of the etiquette of the occasion—he reached out and shook hands with her. "I'm very much obliged to you," he said.

The second of two incidents destined to have a powerful influence at this time in Rose's life concerned itself with a certain afternoon frock in a Michigan avenue shop.

The owners of "The Girl Up-Stairs" were staggered by the figure that Galbraith indicated as the probable cost of having a first-class brigand in New York design the costumes, and a firm of pirates in the same neighborhood execute them. It was simply insane. Many of the costumes could be bought, ready made, on State street or Michigan avenue. Some of the fancy things could be executed by a competent wardrobe mistress, if someone would give her the ideas. And ideas—one could pick them up anywhere. Mrs. Goldsmith, now—she was the wife of the senior of the two owners—had splendid taste and would be glad to put it at their service. There was no reason why she should not at once take the sextette down-town and fit them out with their dresses.

Galbraith shrugged his shoulders, but made no further complaint. It was, he admitted, as they had repeatedly pointed out, their own money. So a rendezvous was made between Mrs. Goldsmith and the sextette for a store on Michigan avenue at three o'clock on an afternoon when Galbraith was to be busy with the principals. He might manage to drop in before they left to cast his eye over the selection.

It was with some rather uncomfortable misgivings that Rose set out to revisit a part of town so closely associated with the first year of her married life. The particular shop was luckily, one that she hadn't patronized in that former incarnation; but it was in the same block with half a dozen that she had.

Rose Aldrich's education and good breeding and her eagerness to make good soon put her at the head of the list of chorus women. How new opportunity comes to her is told in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

His Choice.

"Isn't it rather dangerous to go to Europe at this time?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the con-firmed globe trotter. "I understand that the professional gamblers who used to infest steamships have disappeared, because of the war. I'd rather face a submarine than a card sharp."

Not So Unfortunate.

Romantic Miss—"Shall I marry, count?" Fortuqe Teller—"No, my child, you were born lucky."

Increases Milk Flow.

Spraying the cows with fly repellent is a bit of trouble and a not too pleasant job, but it makes the cows comfortable, and adds to the milk flow.

For Young Chickens.

Chick-size grit and fine charcoal should be kept before the young chicks at all times.

Horses Remember Kindness.

Horses have good memories, and good treatment will not be forgotten.

Have Strawberry Bed.

Every farm home should have a good strawberry bed, 75 or more raspberry bushes, and a few black, white and red currant bushes.

Blinders Not Needed.

The horse that is properly broken does not need blinders, nor does any horse need a short check rein.

Air for Seedlings.

Seedlings should have plenty of air and sunlight to keep them stocky.

Testing Outfits Cheap.

An adequate testing outfit can be bought at a creamery supply house for from \$4 to \$10. It would be an excellent investment for those having cows.

Best Eggs for Hatching.

For hatching purposes take the eggs from the hens that lay best. Build up; never let the standard down.

Preserve Infertile Eggs.

Eggs to be preserved should be infertile, and only a day old.

Save on Binder Twine.

Farm bureau associations in La Plata and Montezuma counties, Colorado, have saved \$300 by purchasing binding twine in 10,000-pound lots. They are now considering buying grain sacks in large quantities.

Plant a Few Nut Trees.

The average farmer might well arrange to plant a few of the choice nut-bearing trees for shade and future fruitage about his home and also in the fruit orchards.

Ease in Milking.

The size and placement of the cow's teats may not have much to do with the amount of milk a cow will give, but they do make a difference in the ease of milking.

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Unfearing.
"The first shall be last and the last shall be first," quoted the devout citizen.

"It makes no difference to me how you arrange 'em," replied the expert commercialist. "I'll get mine either way. I'm the middle man."

IMITATION IS SINCEREST FLATTERY but like counterfeit money the imitation has not the worth of the original. Insist on "La Creole" Hair Dressing—it's the original. Darkens your hair in the natural way, but contains no dye. Price \$1.00.—Adv.

On the Editor.
A magazine editor of New York prides himself on his knowledge of poetry and on his delicate critical sense of the same. His friends often joke him about this.

A noted illustrator laid on the editor's desk the other day a couplet that ran:
"Help us save free conscience from the paw Of hieing wolves whose gospel is their maw."

The editor read the couplet, then laughed heartily.
"Did you write this?" he said. "By George, it sounds like you. Better stick to the pencil, boy. Look at that rhyme—paw and maw. Why, it sounds like the S. O. S. call of kids in distress. Paw and maw! Geowillkins!"

"I didn't write it," said the illustrator.
"Oh, you didn't eh? Who did, then?"

"A duffer named Milton," said the illustrator. "John Milton. Ever hear of him? He was the author of a little thing called 'Paradise Lost.' I believe, but these lines are cut out of a sonnet written to Cromwell in 1652. I—"

But the editor had fainted dead away.

The Average Consumer.
"Who's this man who is telling me to eat the luxuries of a table so as to save the staples?"

"Why, what's the matter with you, man?"

"He's, pither, got to give me the money to buy the lobsters with or tell me I'm one myself!"

International Accomplishment.
"Can the new recruit talk French?"
"No, but he knows how to walk Spanish."

Instant Postum
A table drink that has taken the place of coffee in thousands of American homes.
"There's a Reason"

Delightful flavor
Rich aroma
Healthful
Economical
Sold by grocers everywhere.