

"How's Miss Dart?" Maggie asked him in a casual voice. "Eva? Oh, fine." Hank said. "You've been seeing a lot of her lately, haven't you?" Maggie said then

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL C. BURNS



# Marriage Comes

A NEW TWO-PART SERIAL

By ROBERT WALLSTEN

MRS. DRUCKER thought she couldn't stand to see any more of these young people—the ones who arrived in New York every fall from out of town, all set to take the city—with that bright look of conquest in their eyes. These two, for example, whom she was conducting up the stairs of her brownstone—Mr. and Mrs. Ellit, of Gooding, Colorado, they said they were. Mrs. Drucker peered at them through her glasses. They were not only young but good-looking. They were holding hands, and they had a special, affectionate way of gazing into each other's eyes.

They had arrived with the morning paper folded back to her ad: *W. 80s. Lrg airy 1 rm beautifully furn, prv bath, kitchenette.* Mrs. Drucker could see that they were disappointed, because the room was actually small and stuffy, the bath and kitchenette were one, and the beautiful furniture included a double bed that was a couch by day, covered in worn green chenille, and a red armchair with springs that had long since given up.

"Shall we take it?" the young man asked the girl.

"Whatever you say. . ."

The young man asked how much it would cost, and they both gasped when Mrs. Drucker told them. Then they looked doubtful; they pondered; they held a consultation in low earnest voices, and at last the young man took a deep breath and said okay, it was a deal.

"I—I love it," the girl added with a smile. It was a pretty smile, like a sudden sunrise, but Mrs. Drucker merely nodded. Time enough to get on smiling terms after she saw whether they could keep up with the rent. She asked the young man what line he was in.

"I'm an actor," he said, with pride in his voice. "That is— we both are."

The landlady made a small clucking noise. "In the movies?" she said.

"No, not movies."

"Television? Radio?"

"No, in plays," he answered with an air of reverence. "On the stage."

"Oh," Mrs. Drucker said. "That'll be two weeks in advance."

She could be sure from the way he counted his dollars that he didn't have too many of them. She scuffed away on her felt slippers and the young people were in each other's arms before she'd even shut the door. She could hear them kissing as she lingered outside for a moment. . . .

"Oh, Maggie, my darling, we're here! We've started!"

She looked at the door that Mrs. Drucker had just closed behind her. "Television. Radio." She sounded puzzled and even a little hurt. "People like that never think of the stage."

She and Hank thought of nothing else. That was why Hank had said, "I'm an actor," instead of using the future or optimistic tense. For them—and for him particularly—it was the stage or nothing.

He was perhaps something of a snob about it, which he called "having ideals." The gray flickering window of a television set was not for him. His goal was a platform glowing with amber spotlights, the listening hush of an anonymous multitude. This had been true since the first time he had ever sat in a theater, when he was nine years old.

Almost ever since he could remember, he had been advised to go on the stage. It was advice he had listened to eagerly, even though it came from people who knew nothing about the theater; and when he made his first stage appearance, the high-school auditorium had rocked with the applause and cheers of a

partisan audience. He had even got fan letters, written in green ink by anonymous little girls.

A little later, when he had interviewed Maurice Evans for the high-school Weekly Record—*VISITING STAR SAYS STAGE IS HARD GRIND*, by Henry Ellit—he had learned how dashing and poised, like one favored of the gods, an actor at close quarters could be. And still later, in the Army, his buddies had done their bit to crystallize his ambition. They'd called him *The Lever* or *The Face* or even *Ty* (after Tyrone Power, whom he didn't really resemble at all, except in coloring).

And then the climax had come. One night, after a long wait in an alley in Denver, he had seen a small dachshund on a long leash come out of the stage door, followed by Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne.

The two great stars, man and wife, had seemed to move in a magic world of their own. He had watched them, scarcely breathing, till they were out of sight. He knew that at that moment his ambitions were pinpointed: now he had a blueprint for his future, a focus for his dreams. The Lunts did it, he thought. Why can't I? He had gone back home to Gooding with his plan worked out.

IT REQUIRED patience. First, he had to wait till Maggie was old enough to marry—Maggie, who was unequivocal enchantment in any man's language, fair and lithe, with a heart-shaped face that seemed sweet and humorous and wistful, all at once. He had to wait till she grew up, till she accepted him. The first of these took time; the second was a foregone conclusion for both of them. Also he had to convince her that she could be a great actress. Just as she lagged behind him in years, she followed at a little distance in self-belief, in certainty of her vocation and her talent. After all, her theatrical experience had been even less than his.

She loved to read the balcony scene aloud in that haunting voice of hers, which sounded like a whisper with the volume turned up; but she loved it, really, because she was reading it with Hank. He was her idol, and had been ever since she'd worn pigtails and contrived breathlessly to pass him in the high-school corridor. So when he had described his vision, her blue-gray eyes had widened for only a moment, and that was when he said that he and she would be like the Lunts.

"But they," she answered, vaguely troubled, "they're different. They're—special."

"Well, they aren't the only ones. Look at Rex Harrison and Lilli Palmer. There are lots of successful acting couples. We can do it, Maggie! We can do it too."

The truth was that he could lead her where he wished; he could make of her what he would. She caught fire from his fire. In the end, she believed his dream as if it were her own. Now, when he talked of their future—marquees aglitter with *HENRY AND MARGARET ELLIT IN . . .*—it no longer dazzled her. She took it for granted as he did. They were not even visionary about it any more, but sober, practical, full of plans.

This, after all, was why they'd married, saved their money and set off at last for New York. This was why they were here, in Mrs. Drucker's second-floor back.

"It'll be tough, but we'll make it," Hank whispered, as he drew her down next to him on the green couch. "And nothing matters as long as we're together."

"And we'll be together always," Maggie said.

He nodded solemnly before he kissed her. "Always and forever," he said. . . .

Right away they redecorated. Hours (Continued on page 48)



# Second

They knew the price of fame was high; it would cost them work and waiting. But never once did they suspect it could also cost them each other

# Fashion

A psychologist's fling in fashion



Psychologist Worcester is inventor by hobby. His current projects, ranging from word games to scheme for outdoor TV advertising, include lighter fluid (above) which spouts a colored flame

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR COLLIER'S BY SHARLAND



With skirt and one shoulder switch

Reversible dress has skirt, two-piece top. Half-bodice can be worn for formal effect