

# MASQUERADE

by ANNE GARDNER

Aliecia Baker, daughter of a great New York financier, leaves home because of trouble with her stepmother and gets a place in a show under the name of Audrey Foyle. At the first rehearsal she gains the enmity of Laurette, one of the show girls, but is championed by Garrett, the stage manager. However, it is the author, Jerome Payson, whom Aliecia loves, and she is disappointed on her first party, to have Laurette bear him off, leaving her to the too familiar Garrett.

**CHAPTER X**

A FORMER private mansion, now become a speakeasy. They had dinner at a place suggested by Garrett. One of those which serve excellent food together with any desired liquor to those who are known to be safe.

Garrett gave the doorman his card, and they were admitted promptly after the proprietor had glanced at it. That gentleman, a dapper little man with a suave manner and a sharp, penetrating eye, greeted them as soon as their wraps were removed. Garrett introduced the members of his party boisterously, but Laurette, it seemed, was well known here.

Aliecia must see the bar, Garrett insisted, a real bar with brass rail and everything. Before she could protest, he had rushed her upstairs and into a large back room, where a number of men milled about the shining mahogany.

"What's yours?" inquired Garrett. "Oh, nothing please. Can't I join the others while you get something?"

Aliecia Runs Away

Without waiting for his answer, she pulled away from him and fled toward the stairs, meeting Payson and Laurette at the top. It seemed to her she had done a terrible thing—just as if she had gone into a saloon! She fancied that the men in the bar had looked at her as they might have looked at some common street creature.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Payson, when he saw her face.

Aliecia seized his arm. "I just wondered," she said, "if I could stay with you and Laurette while Mr. Garrett is in the bar."

"Why, of course," said Payson. "We'll get you a table."

"You can't," said Laurette snappishly. "But I'm going to make Garrett buy me a drink. He owes me something, that's sure." She went on into the bar.

The head waiter and the appearance of the dining-room were so correct that Aliecia was feeling a little better by the time they were seated at their table. Payson sensed that Aliecia had been really disturbed, and guessed it was because of their surroundings.

"The food here is really marvelous,"

Garrett, face flushed and speech thick, wished to go to another speakeasy for a special kind of drink. So they did.

By the time they were through there, it was time to go to a night club, and Aliecia, head throbbing, disgusted and alarmed, found herself wedged against the wall behind a table, watching almost naked girls go through weary gyrations.

Garrett and Laurette were fast friends by this time and Laurette was giving him a detailed story of the trials and hardships of her life up to this point.

"That's all I can tell, honest. The real inside stuff. Except to Jerry, I'll tell Jerry everything, and he can make a play out of it and we'll both get rich."

Jerry grinned at her, but said nothing. Presently the chorus disappeared behind a gaudy curtain and the dance orchestra began. Garrett tried to pull Aliecia to her feet, but she protested so urgently that he let her go.

"I'm so tired," she begged, "and I have to rehearse tomorrow. All you have to do is stand around and find fault with us," she said flashing a smile at him to take away the sting of her refusal.

"Never find fault with you, girlie," murmured the now maudlin Garrett. "You're a find, and you're a sweet little kid. You can stay home tomorrow if you want to."

"Run along, Garrett, she's really tired," said Aliecia, coming to the rescue, and at length Garrett lunched off with Laurette in his arms instead.

Payson saw that Aliecia's face was white under her rouge, and as she dropped wearily against the wall he thought she looked like a child that has stayed up past its bedtime.

"See here," he said with concern, "if you're tired, suppose we cut this. Garrett and Laurette will never miss us now. Shall I take you home?"

"Oh, if you would," said Aliecia with grateful relief. "It's lots of fun, but my head does hurt."

Payson signaled the waiter and paid the check. Then they waited for Garrett and Laurette to come back.

"I'm afraid we didn't pick a very lively place tonight," remarked Payson apologetically. "Perhaps you had rather we had gone to one of the big joints. In fact, I'm afraid your wishes weren't consulted very much in ordering the entertainment."

"Oh no, no," Aliecia did not wish him to know that this was the first night club she had ever been in. "I like this one, it's one of my favorites. I often come here. But you see I'm not used to quite so much dancing all in one day."

"Of course not, and we were beastly to drag you out tonight. After you've got your sea-legs, so to speak, we'll make up for this." Once more he found himself forgetting that she was a little gold-digger, that any salary she was able to make would not buy the very cigarettes that were placed in such profusion about her apartment.

Garrett and Laurette, as Payson had foreseen, were perfectly willing to finish the evening without further assistance, so Aliecia wrapped her coat about her and they departed.

In the taxi, she leaned back in her corner, eyes closed, mouth wistful; Payson studied the soft lines of the face whenever the myriad lights fell upon it.

There should have been viciousness

or weakness betrayed there some place. Not hard lines necessarily. They would come later, for she was clearly very young. But where were the tell-tale marks that he had seen on so many pretty faces of late? Search as he would, he could see nothing in the face of this girl but beauty, youth and an innocence that was simply incredible under the circumstances.

Beauty, youth and innocence. He touched her relaxed hand softly.

"We're here."

He helped her from the taxi with the courtly manner of an oldtime southern gentleman, and folded the little hand protectingly under his as he led her to the elevator.

Aliecia found his solicitude very sweet. She was too tired and sleepy to think of the port pose she had been assuming. She only smiled at him, and followed him like an obedient little girl.

She gave him her key and he unlocked her door, still under that strange spell. She must be, she had to be, other than she seemed. There was some mystery—he would solve it.

They were inside. She smiled again, that little girl smile, and withdrew her hand slowly from his arm. She let her cloak drop from her shoulders, and trailing it behind her, walked over to a cleverly concealed coat closet and opened the door to put it away. Inside Payson caught a glimpse of numerous wraps, a number, he could see even in that glimpse, of expensive fur.

"Coat closet of a glove clerk!" he thought savagely, jeering at himself

for having forgotten even for a minute what the girl must be.

She turned and came to his side again.

Payson stared at her as at a stranger, and then on an impulse that took him as much by surprise as it did Aliecia, he seized her roughly in his arms, and bending her back against him kissed her hungrily, angrily.

(Continued tomorrow)

## Rotary Hears Talk On Export Business

Describing a recent trip to Cuba, Porto Rico, the Canal Zone and Colombia, Frank M. Traynor, general manager of the Florida-Portland Cement company, told the Rotary club yesterday of the possibilities of trade between Tampa and those countries, incorporating an eye-witness story of the operation of the Panama canal.

Illustrating difficulties of trade regulations, Mr. Traynor said that cement made in Norway could be delivered at Bahia, after paying all freight and canal charges, at a lower price per barrel than Tampa-made cement could be loaded on a ship at Tampa.

Better acquaintance with the people of Porto Rico, Panama and Colombia, he said, is essential to the successful development of commerce with them.

Richard Jackson and Larry Moore were received as new members of the club. Music was by Miss Carruthers, on the musical saw, accompanied by Miss Ordway.

## CONFIRMS TAX LAND SALE

Federal Judge Akerman signed an order yesterday confirming the sale of delinquent drainage tax property of the South Tampa Farms Drainage district May 4. Purchasers were given certificates which are redeemable within a year. Orders also were signed authorizing E. E. Graves, receiver, to pay \$1000 to D. W. Blocker, as special master, and \$2500 to E. C. Johnson, as receiver's attorney.

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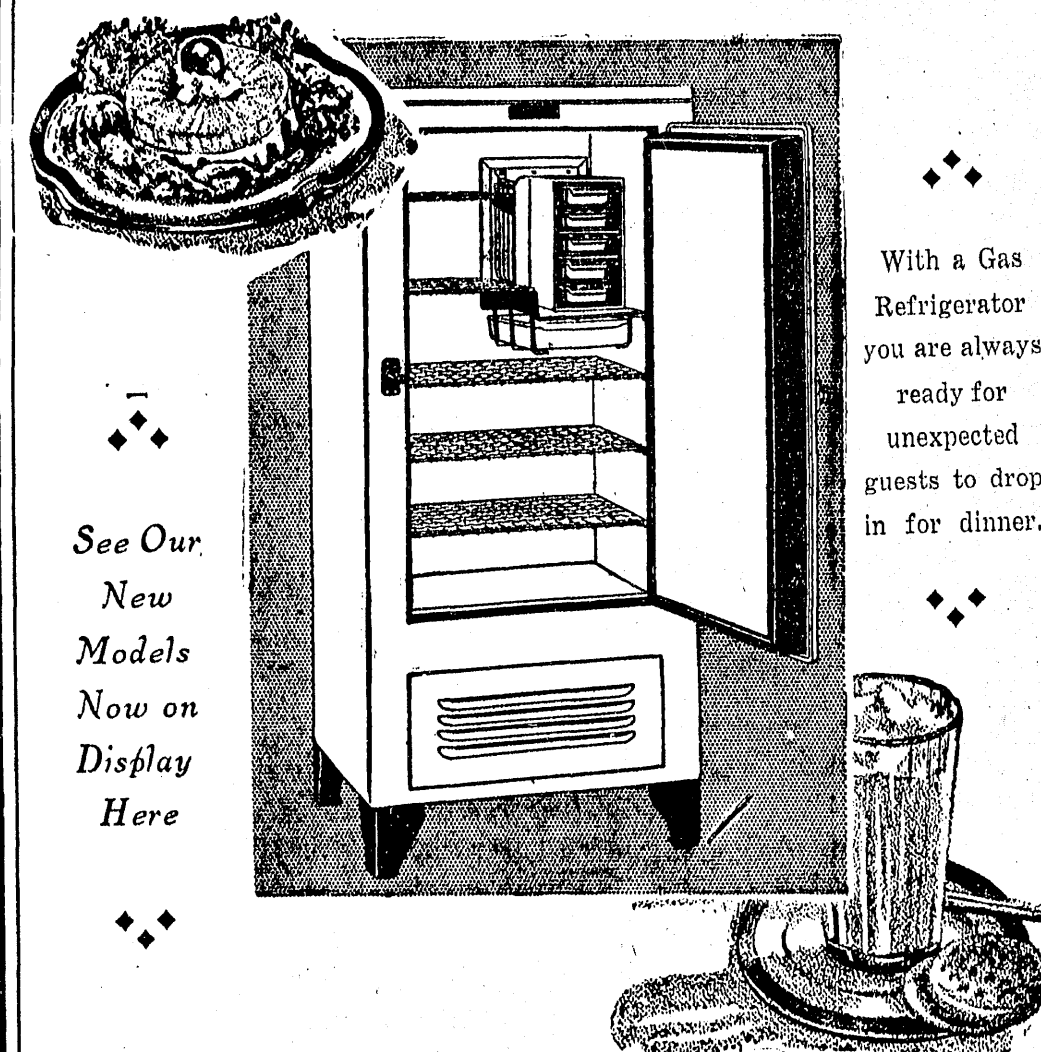
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By ANNE ADAMS

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Send 15 cents in coins or stamps (coins preferred), for each pattern. Write plainly your name, address and style number. Be sure to state size wanted.

The new spring and summer pattern catalog features an excellent assortment of afternoon, sports and house dresses, blouses, pajamas and kiddies' clothes; also delightful accessory patterns. Price of catalog with pattern, 25 cents. Address all mail and orders to Tampa Tribune pattern department, 245 West Seventeenth street, New York city.

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