



*Joan, at twenty-one, has been a bride, a mother, a divorcée, the apex of a famous triangle—and now a bride again. Who can match her career to date?*

ON HOLLYWOOD'S marry-go-round Joan Bennett has pulled the golden ring! True, on the spirited chargers that so gaily pirouette to a mad jazz rhythm, vaguely reminiscent of Mendelssohn, one only goes round-and-round—grasping at new rings, hopeful that the next will be better than the last, throwing the past aside for “just one more chance.”

Joan Bennett Fox Markey, at twenty-one, has been

# Joan Grabs the Bennett Spotlight!

Sister Connie has our cover—  
here's where Joan stars

*By Helen Harrison*

the central figure of at least two famous triangles—but in her quiet, wide-eyed manner the little blonde sophisticate has plucked Hollywood's (and points East) most eligible bachelor with all the ease she has consistently exercised since, at sixteen, she left the confines of a French convent to marry John Martin Fox, then matriculating at an English college.

That was five years ago—enough time for an up-standing Bennett to annex a wee daughter—Adrienne, blonde elf—named for her grandmama, to divorce her husband, time indeed to declare she was “through with romance,” and then to figure prominently in the John Considine-Carmen Pantages triangle. There are those who have felt Carmen, as Mrs. Considine, came off the victor in that hot-cold-luke-warm-hot-again romance—but I share the opinion of most that Joan had ceased to care, or else there might have been a different ending to that story. Considine, you will recall, was the one to first sign Joan to her contract, when she was immediately cast opposite Ronald Colman in “Bulldog Drummond.” She had had other plans then, had actually studied interior decorating and endeavored to persuade her mother to go into business with her. Since then *exterior* decorating has been Joan's line—and what grand curves and divine color schemes she has accomplished.

At all events, last autumn Joan found herself whole-hearted and single—long-distanced daily by a famous political play-boy and a first-water critic, and short-stopped nightly by several of California's most regal Romeos!

Back in 1929, when Joan was seriously considering the movies as a means of earning her sarouks and sables, a nebulous triangle was forming across the continent. Ina Claire, blonde, beautiful, and bewitching had done just that to Gene Markey, gifted magazine writer and coming premier scenarist. For many years Ina and Gene had been a familiar pair at the Algonquin, and week-ends at Ina's beautiful Portchester menage were unfailingly graced by the certain charm of Markey. Here, on the broad lawns of Westchester, Ina would sit, a script in hand, her lovely dogs grouped at her feet—Gene figuratively so—the centre of admiring friends, and it seemed to those who knew them best that life would go on so forever—that Ina Claire (née Fagan), the sensation of the 1912 Follies, the scintillating star of innumerable Broadway successes, would soon be Ina



*Some of the Bennetts at play. Joan's mother (now Mrs. Eric Pinker); Joan herself; Gene Markey, her husband; and Sister Connie. Don't the Markeys make an impressive couple?*

Markey, and Gene's bachelor days would be at an end.

And then another famous star, the recent husband of Leatrice Joy, the adored of Garbo, twisted that papier-mâché triangle into a cocked hat!

It was in the summer of that same '29 that prosperity, the Claire-Markey combine and Wall Street all took a nose dive. Ina had been signed by Pathé for two pictures and was sent to the Coast to begin "The Awful Truth." Gene followed soon after, stopping off at Chicago for some trousseau miscellany. It was there he received a preview of "The Awful Truth"—the horrible, irrefutable reality of his shattered romance—Ina Claire had married John Gilbert!

There are those who believe Gene had dallied too long, but I do know it was thought by those "in the know" that Ina's previous marriage and more recent divorce had violated Gene's religious scruples. It may have been that time was needed to reconcile Gene's Catholicism to Ina's situation—and that Ina was irked. Yet there may have been other reasons—for Joan, Mrs. Markey that is, is also a divorcée!

Gene was deeply shocked and sincerely hurt when Ina Claire married John Gilbert, but he's a swell person—sporting, regular. He became a friend of the Gilberts, was entertained by them and entertained them. And then the Gilbert romance ended in a draw. But where was Gene? Writing in Hollywood. And where was Ina? Appearing in Paramount pictures. And where, indeed, was Joan? Working for Fox.

It was at the home of the Marquis de la Falaise de la Coudraye that Joan and Gene met, the home of that other glamorous Bennett—Con-

stance. And that, children, is how *that* started.

One cannot help wondering if Joan's blonde beauty was not, at first, reminiscent of Gene's former love. Both are blondes, both are women who dress exquisitely, are abundantly intelligent, the natural companions of men of fastidious discernment. Ina, with her wise, twisted smile, delicately cynical; Joan with her disarming pout, her almost naïve glance, seem very different types of women—yet they are both inherent sophisticates. Joan is a 1932 edition of a still young Ina.

As for Joan—Markey, she felt, was at last a man to trust and to believe in. Her loss of faith in men was real when her first marriage proved disastrous. Still an adolescent, in spite of her participation in adult life, Joan was as malleable as are most young girls of sixteen, and the unhappy turn of events to her romance plumbed unsounded depths in the soul of this impressionable girl. Her romance with Considine was probably a rebound from her divorcement. She was finding men again. Finding life and its eternal riddle intriguing. When she was apparently jealous, inconsiderate, and sometimes even conspicuously dramatic, her conduct must be condoned as that of severe readjustment. To me it seems that neither John Fox nor Considine were really *men* in Joan's life. They stand, rather, as ideals of a romantic girl's first love and as the rebirth of romance. Markey seems surely the first real  
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*The mother of the Bennett girls, the former Adrienne Morrison, photographed with her volatile young daughter on a recent visit to Hollywood.*

## Studio Sweethearts

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Joel used to say when questioned on his romance with Connie: *I think that Miss Bennett is really much in love with the Marquis. I don't believe she has a real, serious thought for me.* That will show you just how small these studio romances really are most of the time. Joel and Connie were involved in a studio romance while Connie and the Marquis *were already in love!*

Mention of Studio Sweethearts cannot fail to conjure up the names of Janet Gaynor and Charlie Farrell! We have often alluded to the fact that theirs was nothing but a casual studio romance, but the world chose to believe differently. It has since turned out that they were actually in love with other people at the very top of their private studio romance. Janet and Charlie were together during the making of several pictures. Hollywood liked the team off the screen just as well as the fans liked them *on!* Thus it is an easy matter to understand how their casual romance developed into a hectic bit of headline material. Those who still protest their views to the effect that these two are in love are just the type of people who don't believe in signs—after all, they are married, and *not* to each other!

And how about Frances Dee and Josef Von Sternberg?

There is a cute little scramble to untangle! As you will no doubt remember, Von Sternberg, the director, is the gentleman presumed to be so violently smitten by Marlene Dietrich. This is attested to by the fact that she was named in Josef's former wife's suit for alienation of affec-

tions. They were seen at every event of any importance for weeks on end. Then came the filing of the six hundred thousand dollar suit. It was probably thought best for Marlene and her director to give up their tête-à-têtes, at least for the time being. So, a studio romance developed between—Frances Dee and her director! Just a momentary flutter of the heart, nothing more. Von Sternberg began taking Frances all of the places he had formerly taken the beautiful German star. They were together constantly on the set and off during the production of "An American Tragedy." There was quite a good deal of talk to the effect that she was cutting out Marlene entirely—but now that the picture is finished and released the romance, if any, came to an end.

You remember the hectic love that developed between Loretta Young and Grant Withers during the filming of "Too Young to Marry." The kids eloped despite the strenuous opposition of Loretta's mother, and all went well for a while. Then it began to look as if Mother knew best. The Young-Withers romance went on the rocks, with Loretta getting a divorce.

But a studio romance that looks as if it might last is the alliance of Jack Gilbert and the pretty blonde Virginia Bruce. She was assigned the rôle of leading lady in Jack's picture, "Downstairs," adapted from the star's own story, and Jack proceeded to fall in love with her. She is an entirely different type from the former Mrs. John Gilberts and half of Hollywood is betting that she will make the temperamental Jack happy.

Then there's the studio romance of Norma Shearer and Irving Thalberg. Their romance started at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio, and continued until they had reached the altar. This marriage is one of the points of interest in Hollywood—because it is a happy one. The colony is apt to be caught "pointing with pride" to this romance at any moment. It all started on that certain Christmas Eve when Norma finished working at eleven o'clock and was climbing the long stairs to her dressing-room with the thought that perhaps everyone else in the world was enjoying a sane night-before-Christmas. When she reached her dressing-room she looked out the window and saw her boss, Irving Thalberg, still working at his desk across the way. Hardly had she taken notice of this comforting fact when the telephone rang. It was Mr. Thalberg, who called to wish Miss Shearer a very merry Christmas. From then on it was considered a studio romance until the time came for the actual wedding.

And so Norma and Irving fooled the town and went the Studio Sweethearts a little better by becoming man and wife. However, this is one of the exceptions that prove the rule. Most of our very best Studio Romantics are just out for the ride—merely a method of passing a few hours together. The main reason you and I hear anything about them at all, is the fact that the "whispering chorus" works day and night spreading the news. Every season is rush season among the studio romance gossipers! And it's not advisable to place bets on these romances.

## Joan Grabs The Bennett Spotlight

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person to find worthy love in Joan's heart.

When their engagement was first announced, one of Gene's closest friends wrote him in sincere opposition. It is characteristic of Gene that he was deeply hurt. He could not understand—cannot believe—this first wife shall not always be his.

Joan, who has never concerned herself much with matters religious, although brought up in convents, has embraced the belief of her husband, and to climax the domestic scene the three-and-a-half-year-old Adrienne is an adored and adoring third in this newest triangle!

Let no one be deceived. Gene as a husband, talented, well-bred, fits admirably into the Bennett picture: that of Richard Bennett, the father, and his second wife; of Adrienne Morrison, the mother, now Mrs. Eric Pinker; of Constance and her Marquis; of Barbara, the brunette Bennett, and her radio-famed husband, Morton Downey. But Joan, the darling of the gods, and the certain despair of all men, will, in the future, be a somebody to reckon with. At twenty-one, on the very threshold of life, she has already crowded two normal lifetimes. Will she be satisfied to bask in her continued screen success, in matrimony, motherhood and abundant money? It is certain, as a Bennett, the limelight will be hers, probably the Bennett spotlight. One hopes that Gene will share its glamor. One can but speculate. Joan is very young, beautiful, self-willed. What, after you have seen the new Joan, a deeper, more womanly Joan in "Salomy Jane," do you think?



Joan Bennett, whose favorite colors are blue and white, expresses her personality by having her new Malibu Beach home decorated throughout in those hues. Here's Joan in her living room—and, oh yes, she's dressed in blue and white!