

The STORY of

First Chapter in the Life of the Screen's Most Popular Star

IT WAS Saturday evening, New Year's eve, 1927.

Greta Garbo sat at a tiny table in a tiny tea room in Santa Monica, California. She had just thrown from her shoulders a gray woolly coat "such as we wear in Sweden," and was looking wistfully out of the window as though to penetrate the dark secrets beyond them.

"Let's not talk of me!" she pleaded. "It is New Year's eve. In Sweden that means so much, so very much. There we go to church and eat and drink and see everybody we know. I have been so blue all day. At home, in Stockholm, they are skiing and skating and throwing snowballs at one another. The cheeks are red—oh, please, let's not talk of me.

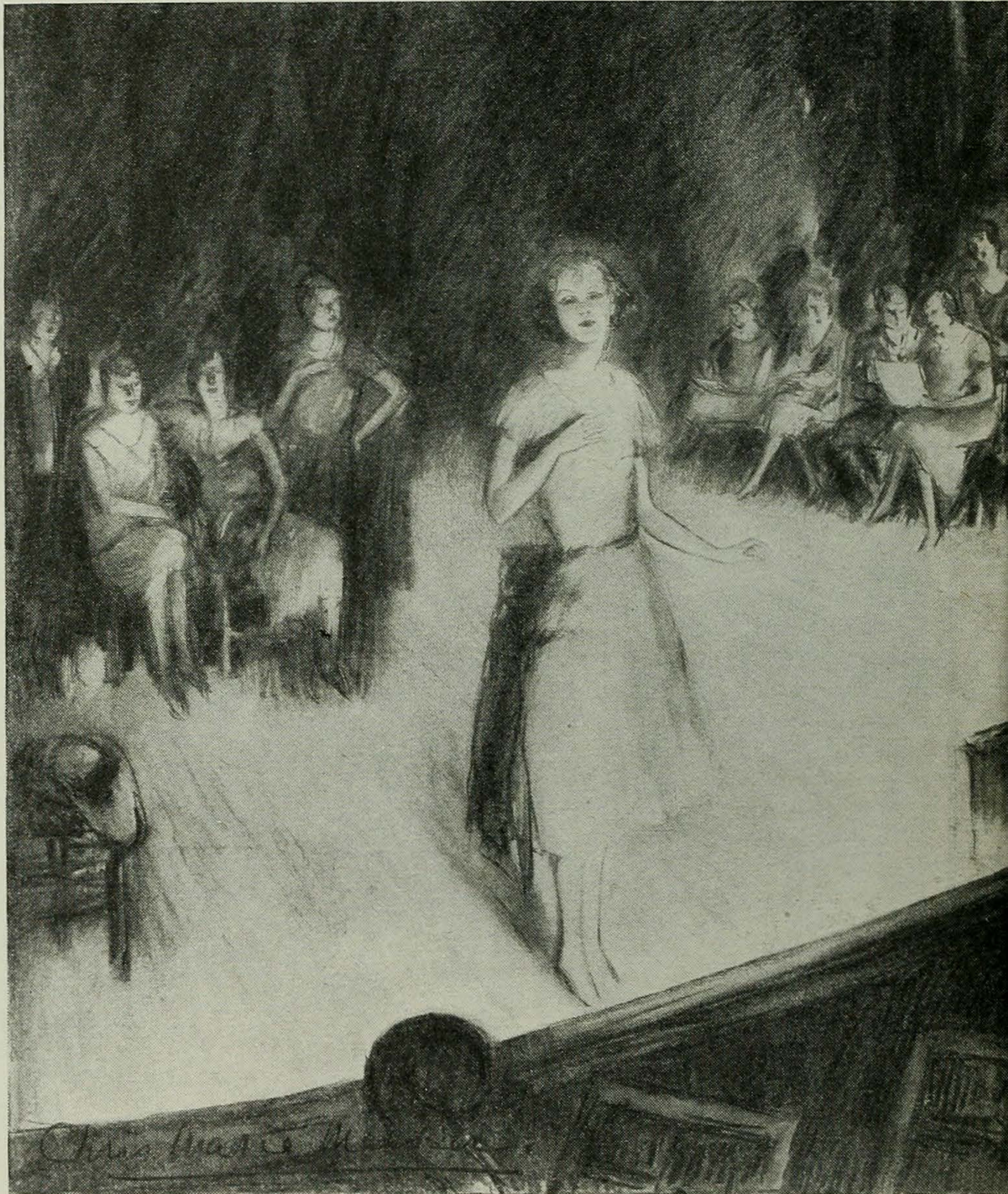
"I was born; I grew up; I have lived like every other person. Why must people talk about me? We all do the same things in ways that are just a little different. We go to school, we learn; we are bad at times; we are good at others. But we grow up, the one the same as the other. We find our life work and we do it. That's all there is to anyone's life story, isn't it?

"I have been reading other life stories. Some people were born in red brick houses, others in plain white board ones. What is the difference? We were all born in houses. I will not have it printed that I was born in this house or that; that my mother was this or my father that. They were my mother and my father, just as yours were your mother and your father. To me that is what counts. Why should the world talk about them? I don't want the world to talk about my mother and father.

"Nor my brother, nor my sister. My sister—she has died since I came to this country—I cannot believe it until I return to my home and find—she is not there to greet me.

"My brother—he wants to come to America. I do not know. Pictures? He is so timid. But, then, I, too, was timid.

"Why should I tell the world about them? They are mine! No, I am the youngest, but they have always treated me as the oldest. I can't remember being young, really young, like other children. I always had my opinions, but I never told my mind. No one ever seemed to think I was young.



"Then my test came. And I was frightened. I trembled all over. All hear was whispering. I almost fainted afterwards!" Thus Greta Royal Theater in Stockholm, the cli-

"My father died when I was fourteen. God, what a feeling. Someone you love is there, then he is not there. Gone where you can't see him, can't talk with him. You go to the studio, work all day, come home to the hotel, lie down, turn out the lights, and think about him.

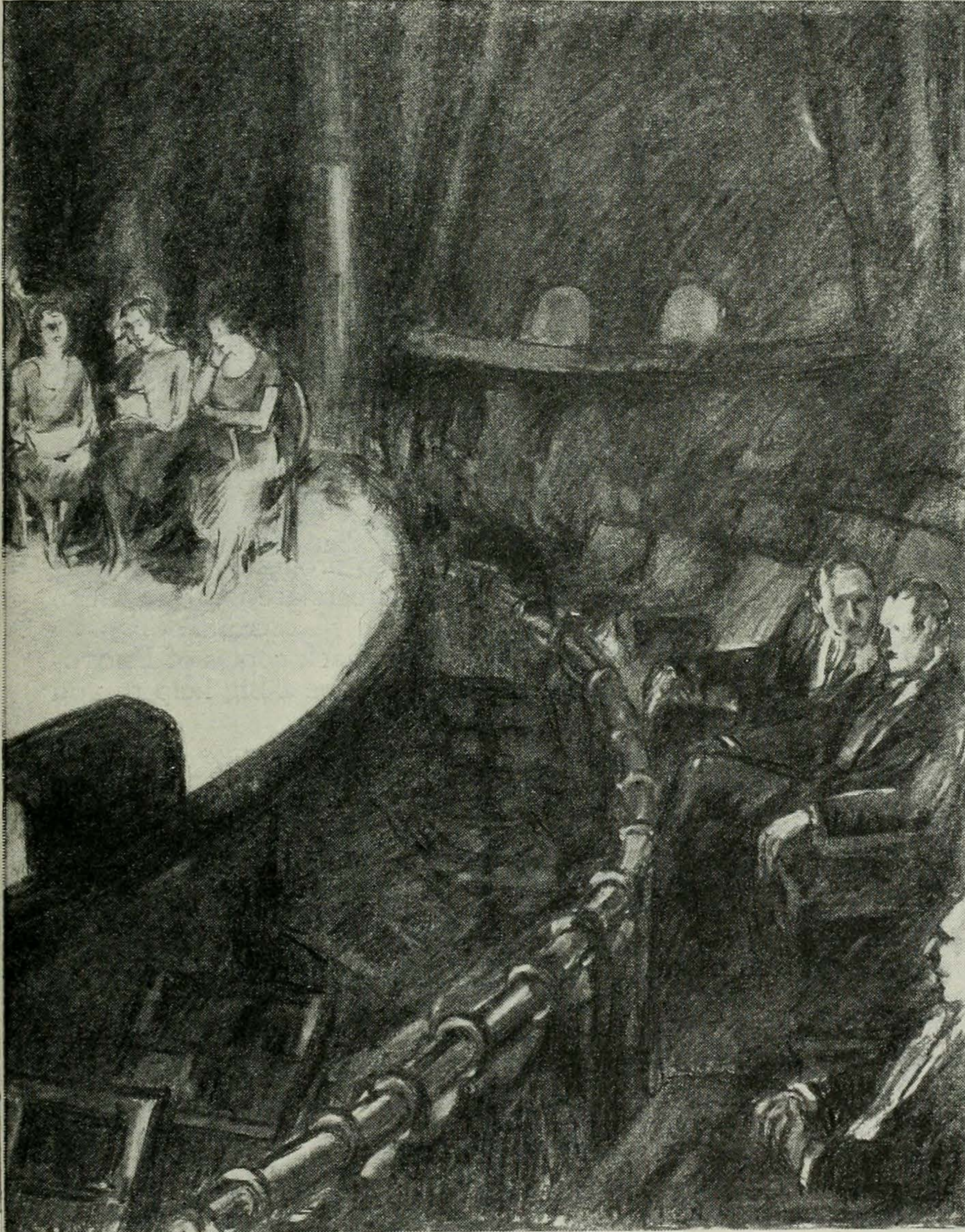
"The same flesh, the same blood—yet he is gone, never to return. Gone—my God, what a feeling.

"I have always been moody. When I was just a little child, as early as I can remember, I have wanted to be alone. I detest crowds, don't like many people. I used

Greta Garbo

As Told By Her
to
Ruth Biery

Illustration by
Chris Marie Meeker



I could see was that black pit—that black open space. All I could Garbo describes her first try-out at the Dramatic School of the max of all her childhood longings

to crawl into a corner and sit and think, think things over. When just a baby, I was always figuring, wondering what it was all about—just why we were living.

“Children should be allowed to think when they please; should not be molested. ‘Go and play now,’ their mothers and fathers tell them. They shouldn’t do that. Thinking means so much to even small children.

“When I wasn’t thinking, wasn’t wondering what it was all about, this living; I was dreaming. Dreaming how I could become a player.

“No, none of my people were on the stage. It was just born in me, I guess. Why, when I was just a little thing, I had some water colors. Just as other children have water colors. Only I drew pictures on myself, rather than on paper. I used to paint my lips, my cheeks, paint pictures on me. I thought that was the way actresses painted.

“Long before I had been in a theater, I did this. I don’t know where I got it; from pictures, from others talking—or just from me, the inside of me. I didn’t play much. Except skating and skiing and throwing snowballs. I did most of my playing by thinking. I played a little with my brother and sister, pretending we were in shows. Like other children. But usually I did my own pretending. I was up and down. Very happy one moment, the next moment—there was nothing left for me.

“Then I found a theater. I must have been six or seven. Two theaters, really. One was a cabaret; one a regular theater, —across from one another. And there was a back porch to both of them. A long plank on which the actors and actresses walked to get in the back door. I used to go there at seven o’clock in the evening, when they would be coming in, and wait until eight-thirty. Watch them come in; listen to them getting ready. The big back door was always open even in the coldest weather.

“**L**ISTEN to their voices doing their parts in the productions. Smell the grease paint! There is no smell in the world like the smell of the backyard of a theater. No smell that will mean as much to me—ever.

“Why, last night, for the first time since I came to this city, I went to a theater. Went down to the Biltmore in Los Angeles. Went behind and talked with the

girls; watched them make up; smelled the backyard of the theater just as I used to when I was little.

“Night after night, I sat there dreaming. Dreaming when I would be inside—getting ready. I was alone. I don’t like to be with people—and I can never stand any kind of fighting.

“One night when I was going home, I saw two men fighting. They were drunk. I can’t stand people who are drunk! One was big and the other little. The big man was hurting the little one. I went up and pulled on the big man’s sleeve. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 78]

THE STORY OF GRETA GARBO

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Asked him why he was doing it. He looked down on me. I was eight years old—

"That's all right. You can go home now. Here's your little daughter." Then I ran away. I wasn't his little daughter.

"It's just the same today. If I see an accident or hear two people quarrelling, I am just sick all over. I never fight myself and I won't do any fighting in pictures.

"I hated school. I hated the bonds they put on me. There were so many things outside. I liked history best. But I was afraid of the map—geography you call it. But I had to go to school like other children. The public school, just as you have in this country.

"And I went to the movies, just like other children. I didn't see a regular theater—inside—until I was twelve. But I went to the movies often. I usually paid for my tickets, but sometimes, just sometimes, the man at the door could be persuaded to be kind, and money wasn't necessary.

"AND that's all I knew of the stage until I was sixteen. Then I met an actor. And I told him, just like millions tell actors, that I wanted to go on the stage. Asked him, just like all the others, how I could do it. He called upon another actor, better known, and sent me to him.

"It was Franz Envall. He is dead now, but he has a daughter on the stage in Sweden. He said he would ask if they would let me try to get into the Dramatic School of the Royal Theater in Stockholm.

"The School is a part of the Royal Theater of the King and Queen of Sweden. No, it doesn't cost anything to go there, but you are not paid for your work either.

"You take a test to get in. There is a jury of about 20 people. Newspapermen—critics; theatrical people, actors, the heads of the School, and others.

"I studied for six months. They gave me a Swedish play by Selma Lagerlov, and 'Madam Sans Gene,' a French one.

"My test came on a beautiful day in August. It wasn't cold, but it wasn't hot either, as it is in this country. I remember

it was right after noon. I was just seventeen. And I was frightened. My knees shook.

"I trembled all over. Oh, I almost fainted afterwards!

"I couldn't see a person. They were

would think I had not been polite because I had forgotten. In a couple of days, they telephoned that I had been admitted."

Greta Garbo stopped talking, drew in three deep breaths, flung her arms out—above her. Then went on:

"Oh, God, I was happy! I almost died. Oh, now, even now, I can hardly breathe when I remember. For now, pretty soon, I knew I was to be a real actress!

"But," her voice became wistful, perhaps, a little regretful. Then she laughed and her eyes twinkled. People do not often see Greta Garbo's eyes twinkle.

"But I was a very bad child. I upset the whole school. I liked to go out at night. We lived right in Stockholm and distances are not as far there, you know. You can take a taxi and be almost anywhere in five minutes. Any theater in the city. I liked to go to the theater in the evening.

"SO I was late almost every morning! Exercises came first—and I almost always missed them. The other pupils were charming, lovely girls who were always on time. Then, in would come Garbo, late as usual.

"I'd come in the door and say, 'There's a rumor about that this school is still here. But I'm so tired; Garbo's so tired—'

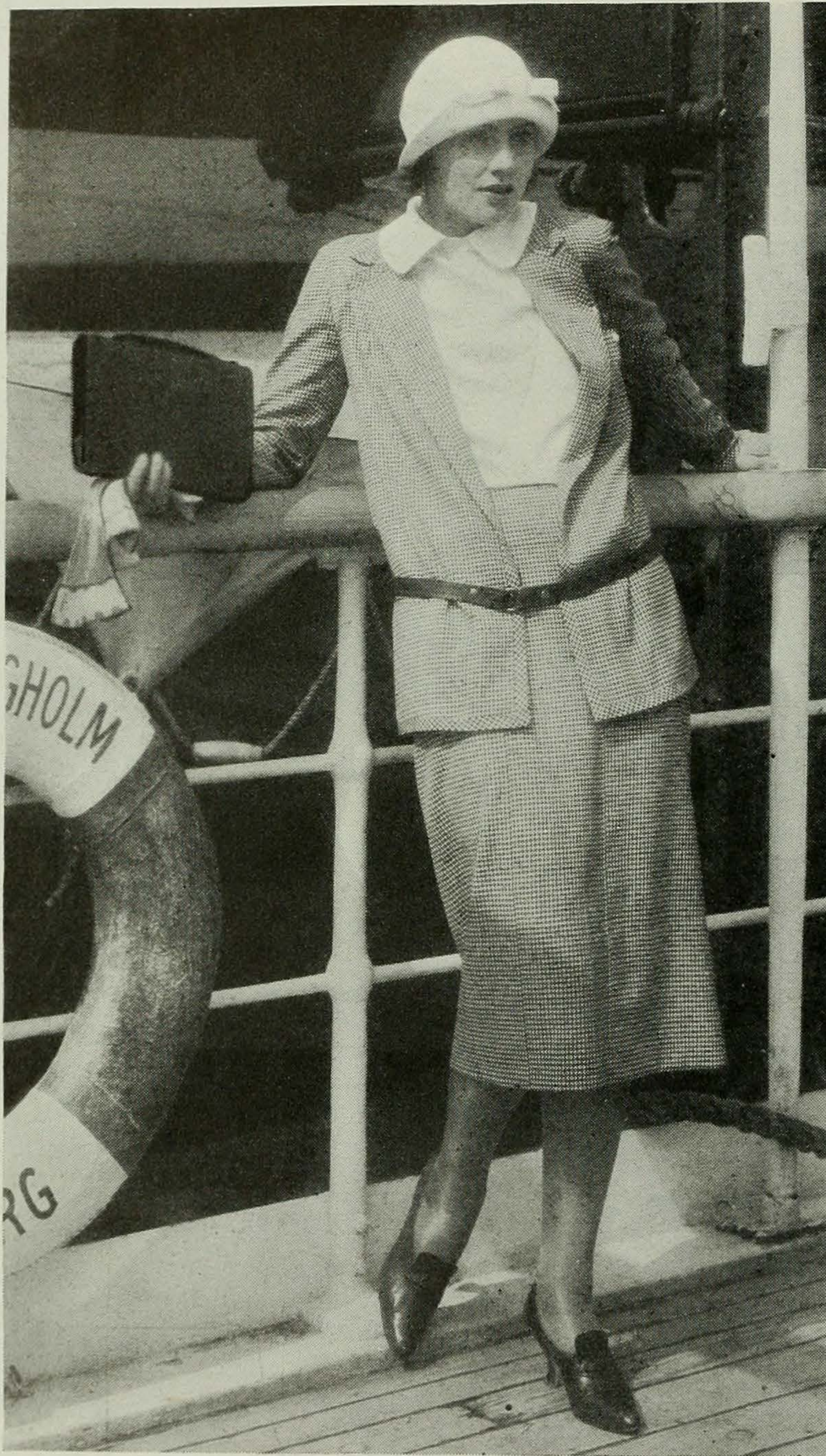
"And nobody would say a word to me!

"Then it became serious. I started being late. If one had the privilege, you know. No, they didn't scold me. If I had been scolded, I'd have been there. I cannot stand to be scolded. Usually, we'd go out and drink coffee, all together, when I finally got there. Yes, they taught us dancing. But I can't dance. I was ashamed to dance. I was so big. Oh, yes, I was big. I was just the same size I am now when I was twelve years old. I haven't grown a bit since then. Isn't that lucky?

"Everywhere I went as a child, I was pointed at because I was so big—so very big.

"The school was wonderful. We had the very best teachers. We were given plays to study. Two pupils and a teacher would study together.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 102]



The first photograph taken of Greta Garbo upon her arrival in this country. She was shy, lonely and strange. Notice, please, the simplicity of her clothes, her unstudied pose

down in front. All I could see was that black pit—that black open space. All I could hear was whispering. I was so shy! I had never tried to act. The one-year pupils were on the stage. They read the lines of the parts which were not mine. I said my speech, all right. Then I just ran off. I forgot to say good-bye. And I was so frightened. I thought they

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The Story of Greta Garbo

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 78]

Individual Expression in
A.L.L.U.R.I.N.G
HAIR



No other hair is just like Miss DelRio's—which speaks its own charm-story of personal good taste and personal supervision

"Oh, of course it's no secret," says Miss Del Rio. "This hair of mine which so many folks talk and write about so kindly. I give credit to real fresh lemon juice.

"It's so simple to reason it out why you, too, should use real lemon juice. You see, all soaps leave a thin 'viscous' curd on each tiny strand of hair after a shampoo. No—you can't remove it with water; no, not if you try it twenty times. It leaves the hair like a mat! You just can't arrange it properly!

"But—when you use real lemon juice, the mild, harmless, delicate lemon acid cuts the curd away.

"Then, you know you have clean hair. And, real lemon juice makes it instantly possible to regain natural gloss; pretty color is undimmed."

Alonso Del Rio

P. S.—"Tell them to do it this way," my hairdresser writes me—"Wash your hair thoroughly—at least two soapings—then rinse well to get out the free soap. Add the juice of two California Lemons to an ordinary wash bowl of water (about 4 quarts) and rinse with this, following with rinse in plain water."

"That's the way he rinses my hair."

EVERY modern woman should understand the value of real fresh lemon juice as a toilet requisite. Send today for our informative booklet, "Lemon, the Natural Cosmetic," containing tributes from screen stars. Write your name and address on margin of this page, tear off and mail to

California Fruit Growers Exchange

Sec. 1904, Box 530, Station "C,"
Los Angeles, California.

"No, we were never on the stage. Oh, we were on the background of the Royal Theater.

"We never said anything.

"Just went on to learn what you call stage presence.

"THE usual course was two years. But I was just beginning the third, when one of the teachers came to me and said Mauritz Stiller wanted a girl to play in a picture for him. I said, 'Ya? I will go and see him!' I didn't think much about it. I never get thrilled about anything until it happens. It hurts too much to be disappointed.

"That day, after school, I went up to his house to see him. I had never seen Mr. Stiller. To me he was just a very big man.

"He is very big in Europe, you know; one of the biggest.

"He was not at home. So I sat down and waited. Pretty soon he came in with his big dog.

"I started trembling all over.

"He seemed such a funny person. He looked at me, looked me up and down, looked me all over.

"He has told me since, exactly what I

had on, even to my shoes and stockings. I had on black, low-heeled low shoes, with black stockings. He just said a few words about the weather and things in general.

"At times it seemed as though he looked away, but I know he was really looking at me every moment. After quite a few moments, he said,

"Well, can't you take off your coat and hat?"—just as though he had asked me a dozen times before, when he had said nothing about it.

"THEN he just looked at me some more and said, 'What's your telephone number?'

"Then I knew it was all over. 'He isn't interested,' I thought. 'When they're not interested they always ask your telephone number.' So I put on my hat and coat and went out. No, I wasn't worried. I just didn't think any more about it—"

But was it over? Miss Garbo, said by thousands to be the most interesting figure in the movies, and certainly the most mysterious, will continue the story of her career in the next issue of PHOTOPLAY.



Three great sportsmen get together in Los Angeles. Tom Mix and Jack Dempsey initiate Sir Thomas Lipton, British yachtsman, into a Hollywood club. The horse that you see was part of the initiation ceremonies