

Garbo in Love Again, but Will She Marry?

New Heart Affair Fires Her Acting

By ROSALIND SHAFFER

Hollywood, Cal.
GARBO is not attractive to the average man. Few men are ardent Garbo fans. She draws her greatest fan following from the women, who have a better understanding of the things she portrays. It takes a man of emotional temperament to appreciate her acting and her personality. Her love of retirement and the difficulty of approaching her automatically repel most would-be admirers, the Hollywood beaux who cast their dinner partners at a public cafe with as much care as they would a leading lady in their new film.

Yet Garbo is human. She likes the company of men. She enjoys herself thoroughly when she feels she knows a man well enough to be at ease with him. She tells slightly naughty stories, plays pranks, gives little parties, even has been in love twice.

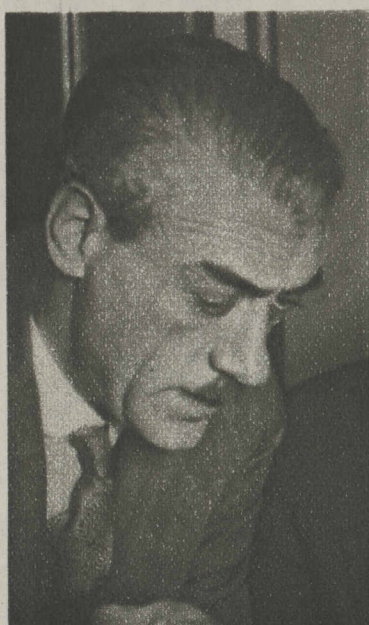
The key to the elusiveness of Garbo is her inferiority complex. She's afraid of people, of what they think of her, of what they say. She is sensitive about comments that come to her attention, either in print or by word of mouth. Yet the last year has seen a decided change in Garbo. Friendliness and informality have increased to a marked degree. This is due to two things: Her success finally has reassured her that she won't be laughed at, and her association with George Brent, charming and gay Irishman, has warmed her nature and given her the self-confidence that the knowledge of being loved gives any woman.

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Greta Garbo's life has not been a happy one aside from her success in films. Born and reared in poverty, her father dying when she was a child, her sister dying when Garbo was just achieving success in America, a land whose language she did not know and whose ideas were totally strange to her, the shy Greta with her introverted Nordic temperament found little outside her work to make her happy.

Love as such had little chance in her life. They say she was in love with Mauritz Stiller, famous European director who introduced her to films and brought her to America. It is highly unlikely that the feeling between them was love as American girls consider it. A middle-aged, pronouncedly unattractive man physically, Stiller would hardly inspire romance in a girl. The bond between them was more likely to have been admiration and gratitude on the part of the girl, whatever it may have been on the part of Stiller. Though he dominated her life completely on their arrival in Hollywood, the domination did not last when things began going well for Garbo. This is not a criticism. Time showed that Garbo acted wisely and well in continuing with her studio contract when Stiller was let go after unsuccessful attempts to direct her at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The irony of it was that when Stiller, great director, was brought to Hollywood by Louis B. Mayer, Garbo came as excess baggage. The studio wanted Stiller and took Garbo because he insisted on it. Stiller failed; Garbo succeeded. Her first film, "The Torrent," started under Stiller's direction. Unhappy events made it necessary to take him off the film and turn it over to another director, who completed it and made it into a great success for Garbo. When Stiller was taken off the film it was bruited about that he felt that Garbo



1 Mauritz Stiller introduced Garbo to the films and brought her to America.



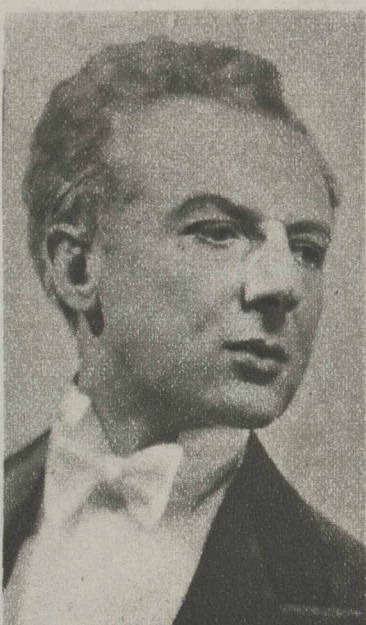
2 Jack Gilbert, the late screen Romeo, with whom Garbo fell very much in love.



3 Rouben Mamoulian, the director, with whom the Swedish star went on a motor trip.



4 The gay Irishman, George Brent, has given Greta a new self-confidence.



5 Leopold Stokowski, the maestro, has been Garbo's companion at several events.



6 Robert Taylor played the great lover opposite Garbo in "Camille."

should have quit in loyalty to him. If it had been a great love between them she doubtless would have. Women in love always do such silly things and make just such sacrifices for men. Garbo stayed with her contract and achieved great success by using common sense.

Another proof that the much publicized and agonized-over love of Garbo for Stiller was not love is the fact that Garbo fell very much in love with Jack Gilbert when she was working with him in her third film, "Flesh and the Devil." This wasn't gratitude; this was love. I saw it, and I know. At this stage Garbo was just as "gaga" as any Hollywood film girl. She went to openings with Gilbert, wearing the standard Hollywood regalia of ermine coat and orchids, giggled and laughed and chattered gaily with her debonair escort. Once when I was prowling about the back lot at the studio, where I had been watching a company that completed its work and left me free to go back toward the publicity offices, I passed the huge stage where Garbo and Gilbert were working. In silent days stages frequently were rather flimsily made, with sides open to permit the free movement of sets and equipment, with large canvas drops if privacy was desired or the weather inclement.

This particular stage, with its flapping canvas, had a sort of wing of canvas at the entrance, sheltered on three sides. As I passed, almost the length of the stage away I saw Garbo and Gilbert in what would be described as a clinch by the proletariat. Having a polite aversion to peeking at people making love, I kept right on going, but the first look told me that this was no mere camera rehearsal, but a very genuine piece of love-making between two very-much-in-love young persons. I was the only spectator to the scene in the canvas wing, but no one has ever been able to convince me since that Garbo is cold and that she is incapable of the gentler emotion.

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The mercurial temperament of Gilbert, who though lovable was a most difficult person to get along with, ended the love affair between the two. After making "Anna Karenina," their second film, they let their love cool, but Garbo always remembered Gilbert as long as he lived, and it was a most generous gesture that she made when she insisted on having him in "Christina" as her leading man. By then Gilbert had lost considerable of his popularity, and her generous act helped him recoup lost prestige and finances.

Meanwhile Mauritz Stiller had returned to Sweden and died, never having recaptured the prestige he lost in his Hollywood venture. Garbo was overcome with grief when she heard of his death, but completed her scene in "Wild Orchids," which she was making at the time, and then went home



Although she appears elusive and cold to most men, Greta Garbo actually enjoys the company of men.

for the rest of the day. Her grief was intense, but it was probably largely pity and gratitude, not love, that moved her emotion.

After the unhappy ending of her love affair with Gilbert, Garbo, who had had a taste of the publicity that comes to prominent film stars and their private affairs, began shunning company. Gilbert loved gay parties, lively people around him. He had tried to make her a part of it all, but though she had loved him, she could not overcome her innate shyness and preferred to be alone with him, without the gay, merrymaking crowd that constantly attended him. Now that things had ended between them, Garbo began the complete avoidance of the spotlight that has characterized her since.

If their love had evolved into a happy marriage the story of both

their lives might have been quite different. Jack had hoped to marry her. He even had gone so far as to have a lovely boudoir completely fitted and furnished for her as a surprise. His little surprise went quite awry. She was offended, feeling he had taken too much for granted. John, always the spectacular lover, the giver of lavish gifts, could not understand her attitude. They broke. Jack went on to love other women, but it was years before Garbo fell in love again. In the meantime she never appeared at public cafes, openings, or parties. An occasional party at the home of a friend in a limited group, small informal parties at her home on rare occasions, made up her social life.

When Garbo attends a party she does it in good spirits—laughs, jokes, and enjoys herself. She re-

sents the intrusion of strangers, however. At a party given by her good friend Salka Viertel, scenarist, there was provoked an amusing example of her rather sharp wit and her dislike to be capitalized on.

Thyra Samter Winslow, the writer, approached Garbo, saying, "I'm going to tell all my friends in New York that I've met Garbo." The retort was instantaneous: "Don't forget to tell them it was an accident, will you?"

During the filming of "The Painted Veil" reports came out that George Brent was besieging Garbo's heart. Brent's was the first name to be linked romantically with that of the ice princess since the days of her affair with Gilbert. It is true, of course, that gossip futilely attempted to conjure up a romance out of the Swedish star's vacation trip into Arizona with

Rouben Mamoulian, the director, in 1934, but, as it turned out, the love factor was entirely absent in that motor trip.

Brent studied Garbo, learned her likes and dislikes, what interested her. He talked to her, played tennis with her, treated her as a very friendly, enjoyable person. He never treated her as the great Garbo, the exotic unapproachable, to be worshiped with the incense of heavy flattery and elaborate gifts. In other words, it was the old pal stuff that Greta went for finally in a big way.

Neighbors at Brent's home became accustomed to the figure in a long cloak that would run up the walk to the front door and be admitted immediately and would soon emerge in shorts and jacket to play ball in the back yard. It wasn't a glamor lady, just a long-legged girl who was having a lot of fun with a very attractive young man. They always seemed to have a great deal to laugh about.

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When Garbo started her most recent film, "Camille," her holiday mood was most perceptible to everyone in her company. She did her love scenes without a screen around her. She rode around the set on the camera perambulator, laughing. She told funny stories with George Cukor, her director, and members of the company. When they went on location she ate at the table with the company, spurning her regulation dressing room seclusion and the specially prepared Swedish luncheon that is usually provided for her. She even climbed a tree, got stuck, and had to be helped down by Bob Taylor.

You may have noticed that the love scenes in "Camille" were the warmest and most spontaneous of any that Garbo has done since the ones she did with Gilbert in "Flesh and the Devil." Being happy is very good for Garbo, as it is for anybody.

The holiday mood was exceptional enough for Garbo to accept an almost totally strange crew on the film. Due to circumstance, her favorite cameraman, Bill Daniels, was not available. No kicks from

Garbo; she went along good-humoredly with the new man. Many of the electricians were new. No murmur from Garbo.

Few people who are close to Garbo are willing to discuss her. They know from experience that it is the one sure way to lose her friendship. A couple of persons found that out by bitter experience, and no one does it any more.

What are the chances that Garbo will marry Brent? Your guess is as good as mine; the only ones who really know won't tell.

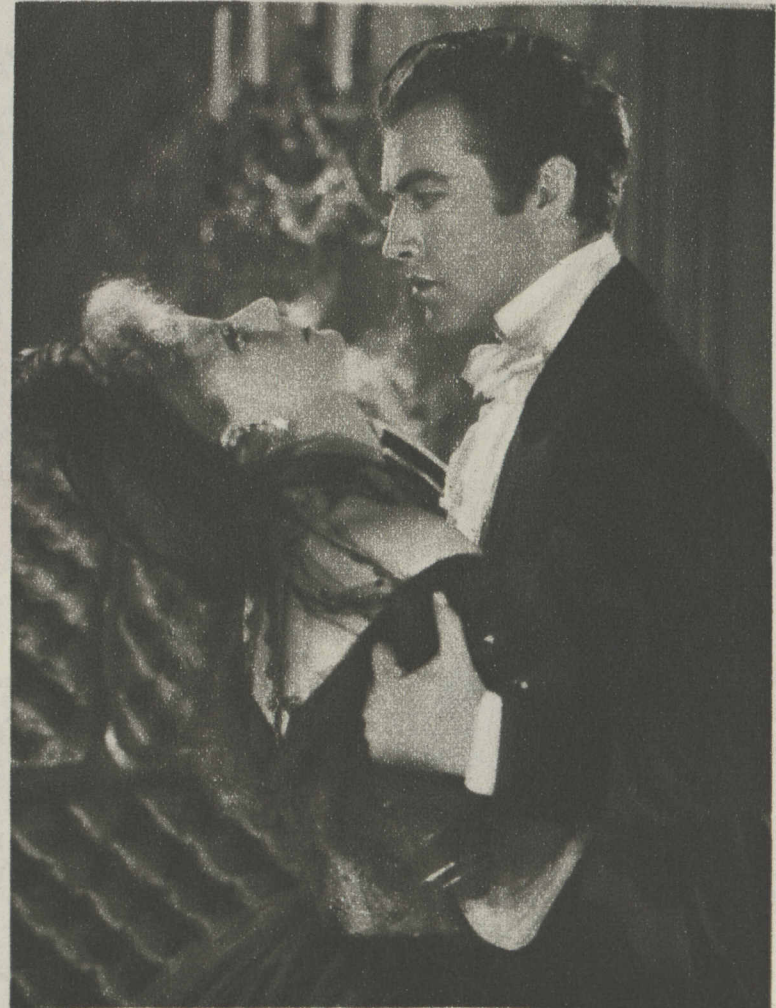
Recent developments have Garbo and Leopold Stokowski as dinner companions—as the gagsmiths have it, "The most famous hands and feet were seen at a Hollywood hot spot this week." Garbo has been Stokowski's companion at several events given by local society people.

Floyd Porter, the electrician who has lighted Garbo before the camera for eleven years, says: "Miss Garbo is ideal from the electrician's viewpoint. She never argues, criticizes, nor directs the lighting for her scenes. We follow the system used by Bill Daniels in the twenty films in which he has photographed Miss Garbo. For gay scenes we use strong lights; for dramatic scenes, including closeups, less light; for very dramatic scenes, as in the deathbed sequence in 'Camille,' we use fewest lights."

Daniels, her cameraman, says that Garbo is not a scene stealer, never tries to force attention on herself when a scene logically belongs to another player. This is a rare compliment in a business full of tricks to gain and keep the camera eye.

"Long shots or big closeups are our rule for photographing Miss Garbo," says Daniels. "She is the ideal camera subject, because so much of her acting is not by gesture and posture as by little things in her eyes, slight changes in expression. She is superb in closeups because of this restraint in her acting."

Clarence Brown has directed more of her pictures than any other director, yet Garbo does not prefer one director to another. She works well under any intelligent direction.



Garbo reached new emotional heights playing opposite Robert Taylor in "Camille."

At right: The makeup artist has made great changes in the Garbo face. Here is how she appeared in early films. 1—With Ricardo Cortez in "The Torrent"; 2—with Lucy Beaumont in the same play; 3—with Jack Gilbert in "A Woman of Affairs."

