

How the Perils of Pearl Are Outdoing the Wildest of Her Movie Plots

THE slim hand of Pearl White, first and most famous of America's dare-devil movie beauties, fluttered above the articles glistening on her dressing-table in the star's room of the Casino Theatre, Paris.

Jars of cream, carafes of expensive perfumes, jeweled combs and brushes, a clutter of cosmetics of every kind—these the dainty hand ignored in favor of a richly carved powder box.

Pearl White's fingers closed on the heavy lid, lifted it clear—

A terrified shriek pierced corridors and wings—echoing and re-echoing among the waxy drops, sending stage hands and actors dashing to Pearl White's room. They crashed open the door.

The American movie queen stood on top of a stool, staring with horrified eyes at the surface of the dressing-table. There, twisting and writhing among the polished jars and bottles, its glistening body flecked with pink powder, its tongue darting back and forth, was a live and frenzied viper.

"Mon dieu!" screamed the French—both men and women. A stage hand drew back his arm and let fly a hammer. The mirror went with a crash. His snakeship slid to the floor. Before he could glide another inch, Pearl White herself reached for a glass bottle. A moment later the snake was twitching its last among the ruins.

The American reader might assume that, amid all this excitement, a cameraman was busy on one side of the room. No such assumption could be farther from the truth.

The serpent secreted in her powder-box was just one of many bona fide, amazing, unexpected, un-filmed and un-press-agented thrills that make the private life of Pearl White, twice as romantic, twice as breathlessly exciting as any of her roles before the camera.

The average movie fan scoffs at "bear stories" of his favorites off the screen. He has heard nothing from Los Angeles to shake his conviction that movie folks, on the whole, live lives pretty much like other people's. If their share of domestic scandal seems greater, their share of real thrills seems not. Charlie Chaplin plays the violin in off hours; Bill Hart has a garden, and Doug Fairbanks sprained his thumb tacking up pictures. Why shouldn't Pearl White spend

Below—
Vera Maxwell,
Former
Dancing
Partner of
"Wally"
McCutcheon,
Pearl
White's
Missing
Husband.

A Striking Photo-Pose by Pearl White, Whose Filmed "Perils" Are Being Eclipsed by Very Real Ones.

her evenings knitting? Thus the movie fan.

But he's wrong. Pearl has been starred in a real life, not a reel life, drama of thrill piled on thrill. She made movie history with that famous serial, "The Perils of Pauline"; but Pauline, in her dizziest adventures, couldn't match Pearl.

At eighteen she was a "one-day bride." Eloping with Victor Suiberland, a Broadway matinee idol, she quit him before the ink was scarcely dry on the marriage certificate. Divorcing him, she met and married Major Wallace McCutcheon, Cornell football star, actor and war hero.

He came back to Broadway with medals, with thirty-one separate shrapnel wounds, with a silver plate serving for part of his skull—knocked off by a shell in the Battle of the Somme. His marriage to Pearl White followed. They were madly in love. No couple could have been happier—to all appearances.

Then, only a year ago, Pearl White filed suit for divorce, won her decree, and sailed for Europe. "Wally" McCutcheon took the wreck of his romance hard. A week after Pearl White left the States he disappeared. Pearl White does not know to-day whether he is alive or dead.

Another romance has come into her life since he passed out of it. They say in Paris, where Pearl White was the star at the Casino all this past season, that no man danced attendance on her so persistently as the Duke of Vallobrosa, who traces his title back to a Sardinian house of the thirteenth century.

The Duke is a Yale graduate and a wealthy banker, and the ex-husband of Maria Theresa, daughter of the wealthy Madame Bourgeois de Bozas. He divorced Maria in Paris after yanking a Parisian

The gendarmes could never find how it "happened" to fall just at that moment.

Paris says the vindictive enemy might also clear up the mystery of a fire that broke out one night in Pearl White's dressing-room—a fire that raged for hours, destroying the theatre, sending the audience in a panic to the street, endangering the lives of the entire company.

Or, could Pearl White's rumored rival for the title of Vallobrosa explain why the cable of the Casino's airplane device was found frayed to the breaking point—threads severed as though by a chisel—the discovery made less than five minutes before the American girl was to trust her strength to that slender rope in a giant swing to the roof of the house?

Fire—reptile—cut cable—crashing weight—anonymous letters—threats—green-eyed jealousy—a Duke—these are the latest chapters in a career that already includes two divorces, a one-day honeymoon and an ex-husband vanished off the face of the earth. Come on, gentlemen of Hollywood! Can you concoct any shocker to out-shock the really-true "Perils of Pearl"?

Paris Whispers That a Jealous Rival May Explain Who Hid the Deadly Viper in the Movie Star's Make-Up Case



The Duke of Vallobrosa, Who Has Been Dancing Attendance on Pearl White in Paris.

boulevardier by the scruff of the neck from the limousine where the objectionable person was riding beside her.

Though Pearl White denies she is engaged, tongues in Paris continue to wag. And those tongues say that a certain Paris beauty, rumored to be deeply enamoured of the Duke of Vallobrosa, could tell a thing or two about "The Perils of Pearl" had she the mind to.

The beauty could, hint the Parisian gossips, explain how that venomous serpent came to be hidden in Pearl White's powder box at the Casino de Paris. She might explain why a fifty-pound weight crashed down into the wings of the theatre just as Pearl White was about to trip onto the stage, laughter in her eyes and a song on her lips. The weight missed her by inches.

Pearl White and Major Wallace McCutcheon from a Photo Taken When He Returned from the War.

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