

# It's Never Been Done Before



Ketti Gallian did not speak English when Winfield Sheehan discovered her. She learned to in a hundred days!

Sten, Dietrich, and all the rest really were stars abroad, but "Marie Galante" is Ketti's début as a movie lead

**I**T has never happened before. True, there have been the Garbos, the Dietrichs, the Stens, the Lilian Harveys, the Madeleine Carrolls—a whole parade of glamorous ladies from Europe to the American screen—but they were all stars in their own countries before boarding fast liners for our shores.

Never before has a virtual unknown—a girl with only one major stage appearance to her credit, and whose screen experi-

## An extra girl from overseas becomes the star of her first Hollywood film

*By Robert Burkhardt*

ence consisted of appearing as an extra and bit player—been brought to Hollywood from overseas and pitchforked into a starring rôle for her picture début.

The girl is Ketti Gallian, of France. The story of her discovery and the odd provisions of her contract is one of the most unusual in the history of a place where the unusual occurs so often that it has become commonplace.

It happened one night—

[ PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 106 ]

# It's Never Been Done Before

[ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 51 ]

A producer, in London on business, sought relaxation at the theater with friends. The play was "The Ace," which had been a sensation in the English metropolis for several months.

Even so, tired from a day of conferences and checking reports, the producer leaned back in his chair, prepared to be bored.

But in the first five minutes, he not only was interested, he was sitting on the edge of his seat. A new personality—vibrant, intriguing, compelling—had flashed across his consciousness.

**A**N olive-skinned beauty with flax-blond hair and big blue-green eyes, she wore the simple costume of a French gamin stranded in Germany during the war. A scarlet hair-ribbon and sheer black silk stockings added a saucy pertness which was devastating.

It was easy to identify her from the program, as she was the only feminine member of the cast. Ketti Gallian! An intriguing name—one that would look well on theater marquees.

The producer, Winfield Sheehan, sighed deeply. For more than a year he had been searching the world over for the ideal girl to play the title rôle in "Marie Galante," the Prix de Rome novel by Jacques Deval which had caused a sensation in Europe and an equal one in America when it was published in English.

Here, if the gods were good, was the very girl he had been seeking. If she filmed well, his long search was at an end.

Through his London associates, he arranged for an interview at Miss Gallian's hotel. When he arrived to keep the appointment, her secretary was called in to interpret. Miss Gallian's English vocabulary embraced no more than "How do you do," "Thank you," and "Good-bye," despite her months in London.

She had no intention of remaining in England when she accepted the rôle of the French girl in "The Ace," and, as her lines were all in her native language, there was no necessity for her to learn English. She did the same as most Americans do who go to France for a visit—hired a bilingual secretary, and transacted all business through her, even to her shopping.

Mr. Sheehan found Miss Gallian delightful on acquaintance and speedily arranged for her to make a screen test. Language offered no complications, as she merely did a scene from "The Ace" before the camera.

She screened gorgeously, the searching eye of the camera recording many facets of her piquant personality that were lost over the footlights.

The producer found the little French actress more than eager to visit Hollywood. But there were several items to be settled first. That matter of language—*oui*, she would learn English within one hundred days. Screen training—she would submit herself to any instruction deemed necessary. Remodeling her figure—*Oo, la la!*

Famous artists had pronounced her figure *tres chic*.

Why must she change?

It was patiently pointed out that the camera magnifies, and that a person who may look perfect on the street or the stage, often will look too large on the screen.

*Oui*—Gallian would reduce, too, if it were necessary. And so the very unusual contract was signed.

On Christmas Eve, her birthday, incidentally, Ketti Gallian arrived at the Hollywood airport. A stranger in a strange land, her first impulse was to hop another plane for home.

She had been seasick on the rough ocean crossing aboard the Italian Rex. She was airsick following her speedy dash across the continent by plane, and heartsick and lonesome for her relatives and friends more than six thousand miles away in Europe.

**A**N additional provision of her contract required that, in order to insure her concentration on learning English, she must not associate with French or French-speaking people during the period of her training.

The only answer she knew to homesickness and discouragement was work, so the volatile, flax-haired starlet settled down to a period of intensive study and the bitter drudgery of lonely labor.

Margaret Knapp, who last year coached

Anna Sten, the Russian actress, in English so successfully, was retained to tutor the French girl.

The young ladies shared an apartment, to obtain better results on the concentrated course of lessons.

Miss Gallian's only relaxation contributed to her education, too.

She listened to the radio and attended American movies to become accustomed to the proper enunciation of words.

**T**ECHNICAL resources of Fox Movietone City were placed at Miss Gallian's disposal. She was coached in histrionics, she was drilled in poise and carriage.

In a hundred days she had learned English. She became sufficiently acquainted with the language to read her lines clearly and distinctly, with just the trace of accent which movie-goers find so delightful in foreign stars.

Through exercise—horseback riding, bicycling, tennis and swimming—and a balanced menu of wholesome foods, she reached her proper weight and the slender, sinuous silhouette her height and characteristics call for.

Miss Gallian was born in the south of France, but her coloring, features and figure are not typical of that region. She is a marked contrast to the small-statured brunette women of southern Europe.

Straight as an arrow, she is wide-shouldered, thin-hipped, with light tresses and blue-green eyes.

Perhaps this is due to the influence of her mother, whose family was of Nordic origin, though French for generations. Ketti's mother was born in Boulogne-sur-Mer on the English Channel. Ketti's father, Victor Galliano, is Italian born, from the Piedmont.

A grape-grower, his vineyards extend up the hillsides of the Maritime Alps, drinking in the sun from the warm southern exposure.

Victor Galliano became a French citizen before the war and was mobilized with the French army when hostilities broke out in 1914. He went to the trenches early in 1915, was slightly wounded, went back to the lines, then came down with pneumonia.

After a long siege in a hospital, he was finally invalided out of the service.

Ketti was a war baby. She was born during the dark days of the great struggle, far from the front, but a stone's throw from the Mediterranean Sea where enemy sea raiders frequently attempted to shell the ports—where enemy aircraft soared down the Rhone Valley to bomb distant cities.



Roger Pryor is proving a most attentive listener to Ann Sothorn's reading. The romance between this couple, seen dining at the Brown Derby restaurant, is said to be growing