

PHOTOPLAY

NOVEMBER, 1930

Europe's Favorite!



BY the time I arrived in Europe last spring I was convinced that Greta Garbo is the most famous woman in the world.



1928

It had begun on the boat. I went over, in pursuit of my duty as a fashion designer in Hollywood, on a German liner. The second day out I was having my nails done when the manicurist asked where I came from. I said, "California."



1930

"San Francisco?" she asked.



1930

"No," I replied, "Hollywood."



1934

"Hollywood! Do you know any of the movie stars?"

I admitted that I knew a few. "Tell me," she said, a tremor of suppressed excitement coming into her voice, "Do you know Greta Garbo?"

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I should have known better, but I answered, "Very well. She has been at my home for dinner."

Shortly afterwards I picked up my mangled right hand and departed. The manicurist was lying in a swoon.

This made me believe that I'd have a swell time in Europe. I had a vision of myself at Buckingham Palace announcing to one of the king's gentlemen-in-waiting that I knew Garbo. This would, I felt sure, admit me to the throne room. I felt that, perhaps, I'd become known throughout the Continent as "the man who knows Garbo." I prepared to be the sensation of Europe.

But here you see a man broken in spirit. I have returned. I don't know anything about Hollywood. I have fitted the most famous figures in the world. The most important beauties have been in my shop. But Hollywood's favorite son, the star who creates the most interest abroad, is unknown to me. I'm as crushed as a tulle scarf after a party.

I woke up to this terrible fact in the Alps. We happened to meet three Swiss boys and started to talk. I told them I was from Hollywood. Smugly I waited for the burning question, "Do you know Garbo?"

"You know everybody in Hollywood?" they asked. I blushed modestly and admitted that I did.

"Ah," they said.

"And don't you want to know about the stars?" I went on. "Shall I tell you about Garbo?"

A smile passed across their face. "Garbo? Yes, we like her. But the star we'd love to know everything about is—Mickey Mouse!"

I was ruined. I did not know Mickey Mouse and instead of being a sensation, I was spurned. Instead of being the "man who knew Garbo," I was "the man who did not know Mickey." It was thus all over Europe.

In London a Ruth Chatterton picture was playing at one of the biggest theaters. Her name was in lights, but above it in letters five times as big was "A Mickey Mouse Comedy."

In Berlin one theater advertised for

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its feature, "Five Mickey Mouse Pictures." There were hundreds standing in line waiting to get in.

In out of the way towns in the south of France I found Mickey Mouse comedies. Tucked away off the highways in Spain were Mickey Mouse comedies.

They speak of him as "Mickey," as they once called Charles Chaplin "Charlot."

Undoubtedly Garbo is the best known woman in the world. But Mickey Mouse is her European rival for popularity.

The tragic part, personally, is that I couldn't answer their questions. I did not know how Mickey came into being. I know now. Upon my return to Hollywood I went to the Walt Disney studios and got acquainted with Mr. Mickey. I may go to Europe again and I don't want to be the social outcast I was this time.

Howard Greer