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JUNE



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See page 20

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Radio AND TELEVISION MIRROR

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M-G-M Photo

THE *Girl*

■ It wasn't the passionate red of her hair or the tantalizing blue of her eyes that he saw in that split second of falling in love with Lana Turner

By JUDY
ASHLEY

■ They called her "The Nightclub Baby," but they didn't know the real Lana—a lonely, unhappy girl. Only Artie was able to see beneath the surface.

THE bride's hair is copper and gold, her eyes a technicolor achievement, her lips a warm promise. She loves to dance—it would be a crime if she didn't take advantage of those lovely legs—and once she dreamed of a church wedding with yards of tulle and a score of flower girls.

She is gay, charming, and not long ago, queen of the night club cuties who would one day marry in splendor, after weeks of careful preparation and publicity.

The groom has intense black eyes and midnight black hair and freckles, large ones, across the bridge of his nose. He has also, behind him, two divorces and a recent flight into obscurity in which he left behind contracts worth a quarter of a million dollars.

Which, in a way, sums up the amazing marriage of Lana Turner and Artie Shaw. By rights, it is a story that belongs in a book or on the screen. In real life, people seldom find love and marriage in an instant.

It surprised no one that unpredictable, inexplicable Artie Shaw should suddenly stop his car on a warm midnight in the desert and propose to a girl who had thought she hated him.

But it did shock everyone who thought he knew Lana Turner that she was the girl proposed to and that she had accepted. For everyone had a preconceived idea about Lana and it didn't allow for such an elopement.

Not that life hasn't always been a spur-of-the-mo-

Artie Shaw Married

ment thing with Lana. Her fair round face framed in luxuriant hair constantly brought quick second glances from males of every age. I remember a day a certain lad came home from Hollywood High School with a tale of a new beauty who had just enrolled in his classes.

"Julia Turner is her name," we remember him saying. "She comes from San Francisco, and you should see the fellows hang around, all ga ga. And me with them."

So you see, I had a bit of first-hand information concerning the young lady before I met her. About a year later, after Lana had experienced another of those lightning-quick events in her life, I met her, at Warners Studio. She'd become Lana Turner by then, instead of Julia, having been discovered by a friend of director Mervyn LeRoy's, and had already created a good man-sized stir as the "sweater girl" in "They Won't Forget."

I got my first insight into blue-eyed Lana that day. "I nearly died when I saw myself on the screen in that sweater," she confided. "I went home and cried myself sick. I had no idea; I just couldn't believe they would do it to me."

If you remember the form-revealing sweater she

wore in that picture, you'll understand the reason for Lana's distress.

You saw her occasionally in the commissary and at local night spots. There was a wistfulness about her, in those days, even when her laugh seemed gayest. Sometimes her eyes were clouded as she danced with dark handsome Greg Bautzer, the local attorney who was her constant escort, at the Brown Derby or the Troc. She seemed always to be hanging onto his every word. It was easy to see who dominated in that pair.

Bautzer and Lana were said to be engaged to be married and I'm sure Lana hoped their romance would end in marriage. But they quarreled bitterly and constantly. Bautzer insisted, so friends told me, that Lana give up her career when they married; that career so new and bright and shiny, racing forward with all the speed of a meteor. For Lana was catching on with the fans. Her work in "The Glamour Girls" and "Dancing Co-Ed" had sent her stock sky-high.

"Give it up," Bautzer argued. But—and here's the But that married Lana to Artie Shaw—he offered no soul-satisfying compensation for the sacrifice.

"As a housewife I couldn't fry butter," Lana said. "What could I do?"

"Well, I simply won't be married to a woman who

■ "For the first time I'm able to enjoy the wonderful things in books and music I've longed for," says Lana.



makes more money than I do," Greg told her, and so it went on.

Lana went on her way, wavering between Greg and her career, hopping, quarreling, making up, weeping, dancing, laughing, deciding one minute to marry Greg and forget work, and then changing her mind.

USED to see her in the makeup department the morning after she and Greg had quarreled," a studio co-worker told me, "and her hand would tremble as she patted powder over her face. Her eyes were not only tear stained, but weary—worn with too much night clubbing. Greg always liked a good time, you know, and Lana, so beautiful and young, liked gaiety too. So it went on and many a time I felt the joy of her work was so overshadowed with her desire to please Greg, and vice versa, that Lana didn't know where she was."

It took steady, clear-thinking Jane Bryan, who made her decision in favor of love, to reveal the true Lana. "I never knew a girl who worked harder, who put in longer hours at her work without complaint," Jane told me one day. "I know, for I worked at that studio in 'These Glamour Girls'. I can't imagine why Hollywood persists in misunderstanding Lana. She isn't a play-girl at all."

But if Jane suspected Lana was torn and heartsick between love and work, she didn't let on.

From another source came stories

of Lana's dislike for Artie during the making of "Dancing Co-Ed."

"Lana would rehearse and rehearse and rehearse her dances until she was ready to drop and then, when they finally were ready to shoot the scene, Shaw would find some reason to postpone it. I can't understand why he provoked Lana so," a studio attaché told me.

It's easier to understand now. I believe that even then, despite all the rumored attentions to others, Artie Shaw was fighting himself. He was trying not to care too much about a girl who didn't care for him, and whose heart belonged to another. And so he and Lana clashed. But behind Lana's beautiful face, the lonely, unhappy Shaw saw something no one else troubled to see in Lana. He saw the real girl, the one we're telling you about now. The girl whose happiness was being stunted, warped. No wonder as Artie and Lana drove along the beach that night of their very first date, that something electric happened. Artie Shaw spoke, not to Lana the glamour girl, but to Lana the woman. It was the first time anyone had ever paid her the compliment of treating her like a mature person.

"I knew in that instant," Lana says, "I'd found something my heart had been crying for, and I wanted to marry Artie as much as he wanted to marry me. I wanted to belong to him, to work along with him, to have a peaceful quiet love, and so

I agreed to elope that night to Las Vegas to be married. In the completeness of it, I forgot all about my dreams for a church wedding with flowers and a veil and all the trimmings. Why, Artie was offering me something so beautiful I—well, I just grabbed it. I wish I could tell you the peace and happiness that is mine now."

Her eyes, no longer troubled, shine with it. It's exactly as if someone had pressed a button that turned on a light that reveals Lana for the first time.

"My mind is at last at peace about my work. I never dreamed I could be so ambitious to get ahead. We've agreed, Artie and I, to try to keep topping one another, keeping on top together. To work hard and diligently, to keep up with each other. I now know no one can be really happy without work. I can feed myself now on all the lovely things in books and music I've longed for. There's no one now to say, 'Turn off the highbrow stuff, kid, and let's get some swing.' Strange that the King of Swing should share with me an appreciation of good music. Why I don't even know if Artie can dance, and think of the lifetime he's spent in night clubs. And do you know the joy of not having to go to a nightclub for entertainment? To sit quietly at home and talk together, and discover the dream and hopes of each other. I used to look about me in Hollywood nightclubs at poor, tired, bored faces and think, 'Why don't all of you go home? Why don't I? Why are we here?' I think I even knew the answer. They didn't want to be alone long enough to think. To probe into their hearts to find the unhappiness that lay there."

And that's the girl Hollywood called the Nightclub Baby.

"Since I've found myself through Artie's love, I had the courage to speak to my bosses about my work. To ask that they let me be me on the screen, and they've agreed. They have wonderful new plans for me. And Artie has wonderful plans for his work, too."

Yes, for the first time we're seeing the real Lana Turner. Artie Shaw, who is at least ten years older than his bride, who has twice before been married, who recently gave up his orchestra at his peak to find himself again, has made us see this new Lana. And if those bubbles of happiness, "big round wonderful bubbles," as Lana calls them, should burst, and bring a measure of heartache, they will still have done a wonderful thing—they will have caused a frightened, unhappy girl to find herself and her soul, and no one can ask from any marriage a greater thing than that.



■ Here was the long-term romance that came to a sudden end when Lana and Artie staged their midnight elopement. Greg Bautzer, above, had been Lana's constant companion until—