

Grace Kelly was born rich, beautiful and talented. In less than a year's work, she became the movies' "most-wanted property." She has turned the Cinderella story upside down by never being anything but a success—clearly

# The Luckiest Girl in Hollywood

*By* PETE MARTIN



Grace Kelly (left and right). "She's a lady and she expects to be treated like a lady," says Jimmy Stewart. "The thoroughbred type," says Van Johnson.



**T**HE headache with any story is usually beginning it. That is not the trouble with the Grace Kelly story. The tough thing about the Kelly story is this: You run yourself black in the face tracking down everyone—including Grace herself—who can give you an angle on her. You talk to those who've worked with her, those who are related to her and those who are her friends. And when you have finished all this, she is still such an elusive subject that writing about her is like trying to wrap up 115 pounds of smoke.

So you find yourself waking up at night talking to yourself. And what you're asking yourself is: "How does it happen that an unknown, seen briefly in an almost forgotten film, *Fourteen Hours*, should have appeared in rapid succession opposite Gary Cooper, Clark Gable, Ray Milland, James Stewart, Bing Crosby, Bill Holden, Stewart Granger and Cary Grant? Why have all her pictures—with the exception of the aforementioned small-fry *Fourteen Hours*—been prestige films—the biggest and best Hollywood can make—while other young actresses must futz around with false starts and have a few real stinkers mixed in with their successes?

Also, how come, although Metro owns her and she's never been under contract to Paramount, she has made only one picture on the Metro lot and four for Paramount? Is the emotional girl who stippled Jimmy Stewart's face with lipstick in *Rear Window* the same girl who trudged, so wooden, iron-corseted and plump, through the Academy-award-winning *High Noon*? And if she is one and the same, what happened between those films to make all that difference? That there is a difference, and a big one, is vouched for by W. R. Wilkerson, the publisher of the *Hollywood Reporter*. Last July he said in a signed column:

This Kelly girl has been given a tremendous build-up—a romantic publicity jaunt with columns, news stories and fan-magazine blurbs about her attraction for this or that fellow, twisted into hot copy in conjunction with the male stars in her six recent pictures. The gal's sailing—in the romantic department—which is good box office. BUT—Grace Kelly is going to be one of the great stars of picture business NOT because of romantic items—Kelly's lovers—but because she's a top actress. . . . It won't be long before this attractive kid will be the Number One feminine box-office attraction of the world.

This was all very well, but it still didn't solve such puzzles as why she was so careful in the past to take one of her sisters, her mother or a roommate along with her on her dates, thus making what must have seemed a fairly sticky threesome to her escorts. Then, too, why did Bing Crosby see so much of her, and was what Clark Gable felt for her merely a fatherly interest?

For that matter, you asked yourself: By the time my story is published, will her swain, Oleg Cassini, have come in winner in the romantic sweepstakes? She is, in short, an ash-blond enigma.

However, I'd made up my mind to find out the answers to at least some of these conundrums. I told myself that if I were dogged enough and industrious enough, and if I asked enough people enough questions, I might not have the Grace Kelly story neatly tied up, but I'd have sufficient

(Continued on Page 53)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GENE LESTER



Since her first leading role, Grace has been one of the "hottest" properties in Hollywood. Here, in a rare afternoon off from her frantic picture-making schedule, she poses for publicity photos.



A sound man holds a mike over Grace, who stars with Stewart Granger in this movie, *Green Fire*. She plays opposite James Stewart, Bing Crosby, William Holden and Cary Grant in her newest films.

Grace lunches at the M-G-M commissary with Janet Leigh and Ann Blyth. She likes privacy; at times she dislikes Hollywood. "Fear covers everything out here like the smog," she says.

Grace signs new film agreements with her agents, MCA Artists. Grace is a Philadelphia millionaire's daughter.





## THE LUCKIEST GIRL IN HOLLYWOOD

(Continued from Page 29)

bits and pieces so the reader could assemble them and come up with a reasonably tidy package of his own.

To begin with, I asked Bing Crosby how Grace Kelly looked from the Crosby corner. "I'd never known her until we started rehearsals for Country Girl," Bing told me. "From what I saw of her while we were making that picture, she has a good mind, a sense of humor, is considerate of those around her. She worked her head off to get the performance the director wanted from her. And what's more, she got it and she got it good. I consider her one of the finest young women I've ever met. If I were fifteen or sixteen years younger, I'd fall willingly into the long line of limp males who are currently competing madly for her favors."

Jimmy Stewart's name has not been romantically linked with Grace Kelly's. For that matter, his name has not been linked with anyone's except Mrs. Jimmy Stewart's, but he'd worked with her in Rear Window, so I thought it could do no harm to ask him if he had an explanation for the Kelly phenomenon.

I dropped in to see the Stewarts, and Jimmy drawled, "This girl has crossed

not thenk she would understand if I said, 'You walk like a sexy duck.' So I say, 'I cannot tell you.' We were discussing how to dress her for Green Fire, and the question came up, 'Shall we build up her front?' I put my feet down. 'No!' I said. 'I prefer quality to quantity.'"

Marton said he'd heard a lot of talk about Metro's slowness in recognizing Grace Kelly's value, but that nobody had remarked upon how shrewd it is to let another studio spend its money building up a star for you and also pay you a profit while it does the building.

With that "slowness" talk in mind, I had luncheon with Metro's production head, Dore Schary. I intended to get down to cases with him about his studio's astigmatism in Kelly's case, but he proved to be a man of such charm the luncheon degenerated into a most pleasant conversation instead. Afterward I remembered only three statements Schary had made.

"A real star has to have a motor—something hurrying underneath the hood. Grace has such a motor racing inside of her, although it turns over quietly. . . . We had a little girl here in a film called Asphalt Jungle. We dropped her option and she popped up at Fox. Her name's Marilyn Monroe. Warner's let Van Johnson drop. We found him useful for years. . . . A business star is one who does business for you as opposed to a Romanoff's or Chasen's star, who is principally useful for publicity. Grace is both."

A helpful friend told me, "You must see Alfred Hitchcock. He's the real key to the Kelly story. He directed her in three pictures within a period of one year." When I met Hitchcock, I said I'd heard that it was his wanting Grace Kelly for Rear Window that had started the ball rolling in Hollywood's game of Kelly-pool.

"If I may say so without insulting too many people, and if I may use a slightly different metaphor," he told me, "there has been quite a lot of jumping on her band wagon. Everybody wants a new leading lady, but there aren't many of them around. There are a lot of leading women; not enough leading, and I quote—ladies—unquote. An actress like Grace, who's also a lady, gives a director certain advantages. He can afford to be more colorful with a love scene played by a lady than with one played by a hussy." When he used the word "colorful," he gave it significant emphasis. "With a hussy, such a scene can be vulgar, but if you put a lady in the same circumstances, she's exciting and glamorous."

It was disconcerting to put questions to experts, only to have those experts themselves beat my brains out with questions about Grace Kelly. There was the man from Metro's publicity department, for instance. He'd been assigned to help me. But when he walked into my hotel room, he said, "I'm hoping you'll tell me what the excitement about this girl is all about. I've been at the studio for years and years. In all that time there's been nothing like it. What gets me is that when all of the hullabaloo started, she'd only really been seen in one picture. We can't keep up with the demands for interviews with her. We've even had somebody here from the Saturday Review of Literature. I've never dealt with the Saturday Review before. For that matter, I didn't know it printed anything about movie stars. I bumped into Van Johnson on the lot last week and I asked him why he thought everybody has a sudden urge to write something about her. 'My guess is she came

along just at the right time,' Van said. 'There hasn't been a newcomer of her type for the past five or six years.'

"How do you mean, her type?" I asked.

"The thoroughbred type," Van said, 'as contrasted with cuties who've flung themselves up any old way. The public has had so much sex pitched into its face recently that it's gone for Kelly in rebellion against a broadside of broads.'"

I finally got in a query or two myself, but I couldn't seem to put my

heart into them. I kept thinking, *He's asking me the questions. I'm supposed to do that.*

In Dave Chasen's Beverly Hills beanery, where the beans tote up to quite a bundle of expense-account money per bean, I ran into a columnist whose job is the Hollywood beat. He was sitting with a man who does what he calls "covering cinema caperings on a free-lance basis for any national publication which is interested in building up its circulation."

(Continued on Page 55)

## THE DEMOTION

Golf resumed its rightful status

Once the marriage was in force;

Then my darling spouse no longer

Put the heart before the course.

—BERNIECE BUNN CHRISTMAN.

up everybody by turning the Cinderella story upside down. She came out here to Hollywood from a happy home, where she'd been loved, kindly treated and well educated. When she decided that she wanted to be an actress, her family did a strange thing; they sent her to a good dramatic school. She took her work there seriously, and afterward worked in television, in summer stock and had a small part on the New York stage. By the time she reached here she was a skilled and competent actress. She didn't have to be nice to this guy or that guy to get ahead. Nobody discovered her at a drive-in or behind a counter. She's a lady and she expects to be treated like a lady. She's on time to work, she does what she's told to do, and because she does it without a sweater-girl build-up—which is the traditional way to do it—there are folks who think she's either high-hat or some kind of enigma. I've got news for you. Maybe she's just shy."

"Ha!" Mrs. Stewart snorted.

Jimmy grinned at me. Something told me that Mrs. Stewart had seen Rear Window too.

When I left the Stewarts, I had lunch with Andrew Marton. He was directing Green Fire, the first picture Grace Kelly had made on the M-G-M lot. Being Hungarian, he approached our Kelly discussion from a Continental point of view. "That walk of hers is sometheeng," he said. "I see her walking in High Noon and I thenk to myself, Wow! When I mentioned her walk to her, she ask me, 'What do I do with my walk?' I have made a study of thees kind of walk since I was ten, but I do



(Continued from Page 53)

"I hear you're going to interview Grace Kelly," said the chronicler of cinema caperings. He laughed mirthlessly. "Ha-ha! You'll get a nothing interview from her. A very aloof chick."

"Trouble with him is, he doesn't know how to go about it," his columnist friend said. "Way to get this doll talking is throw her off base. Get the jump on her. Keep crowding her. Ask her, 'What makes you so hard to talk to? Is it because you don't have anything to say?'"

Two nights later I ran into another writer. This one earns his living by filing stories for foreign release with a Hollywood dateline. He asked me what I was doing, and I told him.

"My advice is, give her the shock treatment, old boy," he said. "That's the way to break a girl like that down." He waved his eyebrows at me. "Use a four-letter word or two on her."

I didn't believe him. That wasn't the way I had her figured. Before coming to Hollywood, I'd talked to Grace Kelly's father, John Brendan Kelly, Jr., known to Philadelphians as Jack Kelly. I met him at his luncheon club, The Midday, perched high above Philadelphia's Broad and Walnut streets. For a man whose 1920 entry into the English Diamond Sculls at the Henley Regatta was refused because "he worked with his hands," and who showed up at the Vesper Boat Club on the Schuylkill River for practice rows with mortar daubed on his shoes, Jack Kelly has come a long way. Asked to estimate his worth, a specialist in such matters told me, "Take any number between sixteen and twenty millions. That'll be close enough." Kelly is Philadelphia's former Democratic City Committee chairman. In 1935 he was a candidate for Mayor and missed winning only by a narrow margin. He is president of the largest brick-masonry firm in the United States, head of the Atlantic City Racing Association, and vice-president of the Fairmount Park Commission and chairman of the board of radio station WIBG.

In her own way his daughter, Grace, has come even farther. Her father's

name is potent in Philadelphia, but recently, when he placed a long-distance business call and said, "John B. Kelly, of Philadelphia, calling," the operator at the other end asked, "Who?" in the disinterested voice operators save for nobodys who think they're somebody. Kelly gave up. He said, "Just say Grace Kelly's father is calling." That did it. The call went through, quick like a flash.

When we'd ordered food, Jack Kelly told me, "There's been too much publicity about Grace. And it's coming too fast. However, I don't think she'll get swell-headed as long as her sisters have their breath. When she got back from England after making Mogambo with Clark Gable, she'd hardly opened her mouth when her sisters began to burlesque her English accent with 'Ow are you, my deah? The tea and crumpets will be right up.'"

Any Philadelphia girl who goes to Hollywood to work in films and who becomes a "hot" property, is transformed immediately by publicity releases into "a Main Line debutante," no matter whether she comes from the Kitty Foyle country out Frankford way, from West Philadelphia or from the Falls of Schuylkill. In 1924, Grace's father and mother moved to the solidly respectable Philadelphia neighborhood between the East Falls of Schuylkill and Germantown. They've lived there ever since. Grace was born there. Nevertheless, she has already been described to her fans as a "fast-rising young beauty from Philadelphia's Main Line."

But no matter what heady brew publicity workers concoct about Grace Kelly as a "debutante," the facts—according to her father—are these: "I said to Grace, 'I hear some of your school chums are coming out. Do you want to come out too?' 'I am out,' she blazed. 'Do you think I have to use those women who sell mailing lists of boys' names to mothers and fathers of girls to get me a date?'"

I asked Jack Kelly what his earliest hint had been that his daughter had actress' blood in her veins. "She appeared in a play at the old Academy at the Falls when she was eleven," he told



me. "My wife, Margaret, and I went to see her. The woman who played Grace's mother forgot her part. Grace dropped her handbag. As she came up with it, she fed the older actress her lines. Turning to Margaret, I said, 'We've got a trouper on our hands.'"

Grace went to Ravenhill Academy convent school, in the Germantown section of Philadelphia; then to Stevens School. Afterward she tried for Bennington, but failing her math entrance exam, she entered the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, in New York. While there she lived at the Barbizon, a hotel for women. "She was nineteen then," Jack Kelly told me. "She's just twenty-five. She was born in 1929, right after the stock-market crash."

I said to Jack Kelly that since Grace's Uncle George Kelly is a Pulitzer-Prize-winning playwright, and her Uncle Walter Kelly trouped the country's vaudeville stages for years in a one-man skit, *The Virginia Judge*, it is apparent that his daughter has more theatrical background than most girls.

"That didn't make any difference," Jack Kelly told me. "She wouldn't let her Uncle George help her, and her Uncle Walter was dead by the time she grew up. Grace has always been hipped on the subject of independence. She's determined to go places without leaning on anybody or using influence."

Thinking of Walter Kelly, he said, "Coming back from World War One, I rolled too many double sixes in a crap game on a transport and was cleaned. Walter had just got a check for five thousand dollars for recording his act, *The Virginia Judge*. He endorsed the check over to me so I could go into the brick business. My brother, George, insisted on lending me another couple of grand. Neither of them would take any stock or any interest, but years later I persuaded them to take their money back."

I wondered if Jack Kelly and his wife had had any trouble developing a philosophy to take care of the rumors and innuendoes they must have read in the gossip columns linking Grace with a succession of beaux. "There's a friend of the family, Scoop Conlon, out there in Hollywood," he said. "He's in the public-relations business. Scoop promised to keep an eye on Grace, and if things got too thick he'd let us know, and either Margaret or I would fly out

and see what could be done. Once, while the rumors about one man were flying extra fast, Margaret flew out. She and Scoop sat down and talked things over with Grace. They found her willing to listen to reason."

I stood up to go. "My daughter, Peggy, is in Hollywood with Grace now," he said. "You ought to see her. She married a young Philadelphian named Davis. Peggy's the family extrovert. Just between us, I've always thought her the daughter with the most on the ball. You can't figure those things, can you?"

When I met Peggy Davis in Beverly Hills, she gave me a picture of her sister Grace's career as a drama student-model after leaving home to go to New York. While living at the Barbizon, another girl suggested to her, "Why don't you have some photographs taken and take them around to model agencies in your spare time?" She'd had the photographs taken and signed with a small but good model agency. Starting at \$7.50 an hour, she worked up to \$25 an hour doing commercial modeling for photographs. During her last year at the Academy, she earned enough to pay her own way through. She made the cover of one magazine three times, another one four times. And she did *Fashion Shorts* for newsreels—jobs which took her to Paris and Bermuda. Finally she landed so many parts in TV shows that her theatrical agency told her she'd better make up her mind she was an actress, not a model, and so she gave up modeling.

For a while she played in almost every dramatic TV show which originated in New York. She appeared in such summer theaters as the Bucks County Playhouse, and at the Playhouse in the Park in Philadelphia, and at Elitch's Gardens in Denver. In addition, she read for thirty-odd New York plays whose cast included an ingénue.

I said to Peggy Davis that her father had told me he was afraid so much publicity coming so quickly to her sister might not be good for her. "Publicity shouldn't throw him," Peggy Davis told me. "He's used to it. My brother, Jack, Jr., has had a lot of it too. He won the Diamond Sculls at Henley twice. That was supposed to make up for the fact that daddy didn't win it."

(Continued on Page 58)



(Continued from Page 56)

Thinking of Jack, Jr., she smiled. "We call him Kel," she told me. "Kel probably thinks Grace is getting too much publicity too. When he was growing up and people would say to him, 'You certainly have three nice sisters!' he'd say scornfully, 'All beasts.'"

I looked up Scoop Conlon too. "There's something I'm curious about," I told him. "Grace seldom goes on a date without a third person along. Is that extra person supposed to be a chaperone?"

"It's my hunch she does it deliberately," Conlon said. "She is very cagey about doing anything the gossip columns can hop on. Put yourself in her shoes. If, to use an old-fashioned expression, you felt you had been put upon by the tiger-cat gossip columnists and rumormongers, you'd watch your conduct in public extra carefully, too, wouldn't you?"

The same volunteer helper who'd suggested that I see Alfred Hitchcock told me I ought to talk to Edith Head, boss of Paramount's "Gowns By" department. "She and Grace are very close," I was told. "Besides, Edith is a whip. You'll enjoy her."

I did enjoy her. Her eyes are bright the way a bird's eyes are bright. Her movements and her mind are quick. She told me that Grace Kelly's interview with the columnist who'd given her the "what makes you so hard to talk to?" routine hadn't worked out in quite the way the columnist had let me think it had. He'd drawn a blank stare and very little information.

"At that point she's working days at Metro on Green Fire," Edith Head told me, "but she drops in at Paramount for a night fitting. It's nine-thirty, and in addition to working in Green Fire with Stewart Granger all day, which can bush anybody, she's been on the Bob Hope show and she's tired. She's thinking about this idiot who asked her 'What makes you so hard to talk to?' and by the time she gets here, she's exploding. People tell you she's cool and collected. This isn't true. Annoy her, and she boils. 'If I don't feel like talking, that's my business,' she tells me. 'I'm not employed to give monologues. I'm hired to be an actress!'"

Edith Head thinks that Grace Kelly has an amazing amount of confidence for a young woman who's just turning twenty-five. "There's a lot of solid jaw under that quiet face of hers," Edith Head said.

A case in point: Last spring it seemed certain she wouldn't be allowed to work with Cary Grant in *To Catch a Thief*, the picture Alfred Hitchcock was to make in France. Both Louella Parsons and Hedda Hopper announced the deal hadn't a chance. Nor did Paramount's head men think it possible to borrow her from Metro once more. After all, they'd already borrowed her three times. When the first one or two of these borrowings were being negotiated, those in charge of such matters at Metro cared little whether they lent her or not. But with an instinctive reaction which is one of Hollywood's conditioned reflexes, they boosted their asking price sharply with each loan-out.

Recently, however, Metro had begun to ask themselves, "If she's all that hot, and she's worth all that to others, why don't we use her in a picture once in a while ourselves?" As a result, the only people who thought that the teaming of Hitchcock, Cary Grant and Grace Kelly was possible were Hitchcock, Cary Grant and Grace Kelly.

"No matter what anyone says," Grace told Edith Head, "keep right on making my clothes for the picture. I'll be in it."

And when the showdown came, she was in it. But this time the men of Metro exacted a promise that Paramount's hottest male actor, Bill Holden, would be lent to them for a picture, as well as an even larger amount of cold, hard cash.

"Grace has a very single-track mind," Edith Head told me thoughtfully.

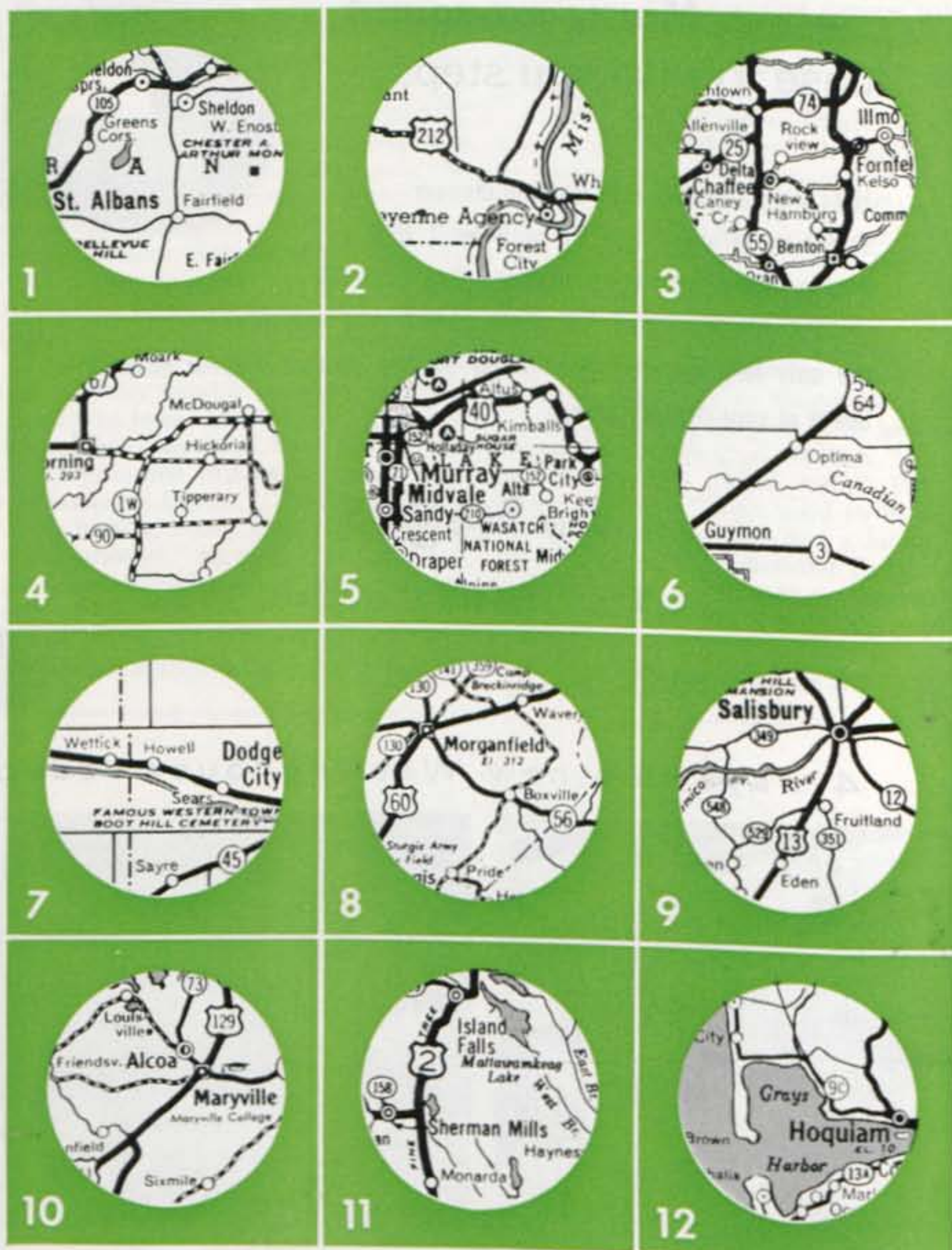
The combination of Grace Kelly and Edith Head demonstrates the magic a skilled dress designer can work with sketch pad and needle. In four pictures Edith Head transformed her outwardly into four different people. In *Rear Window* she was glamorous, beautiful, chi-chi, an exemplar of New York's high style. In *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, the Kelly flavoring was just plain vanilla. It consisted of what audiences will think typical middle-class apparel when they see it. In *Country Girl*—headed for late December release—her garments will make her look older, heavier, less glamorous; at times, even drab. In *To Catch a Thief*, which won't be seen until next year, she is cast as a staff member of a fashion magazine. This called for still another

kind of expensive elegance. By a calculated use of clothes, a multiple Academy Award winner like Edith Head can make women leaner, fatter, younger, older or "fuller in the bosom." "Think what we could do to somebody we don't like," Edith Head told me. She mulled the idea over in her mind, as if it was a tempting one.

The globular-shaped director of sophisticated chiller-dillers, Alfred Hitchcock, told me that he'd first seen Grace Kelly as Gary Cooper's leading lady in *High Noon*, but that he hadn't been impressed by her. Later, while searching for a leading lady for his film, *Dial M for Murder*, he'd run a test made by Fox. In it, Grace had played an Irish girl. Hitchcock wasn't struck by the character she played, but his directorial antenna, made sensitive by years of experience, pinged the message to him that she had quality. So she landed the leading female role in *Dial M*. Hitchcock lays no claim to being an economy-size Svengali. According to him, the only improvement he contributed to her histrionic equipment was pitching her voice lower. "Once she had it down, it was no trick for a girl as clever as Grace to keep it there," he told me.

Fixing me with his round, unwinking eyes, he said, "The perfect actor or ac-

(Continued on Page 60)



RAND McNALLY &amp; CO.

## Where Do You Think You Are?

EAST or West, North or South, each of the distinctive areas above appears on the road map of a single state. There is, as the saying goes, "no place like it." Can you identify the states?—DOROTHY JOYCE.

(Answers on Page 60)



tress is the one who can do 'nothing' well."

When I said nothing, he paused. "Why don't you ask me what I mean?" he asked. "Your questions won't frighten me. An actress who's in control of everything she does is interesting, even if she merely crosses a room, lights a cigarette or does nothing at all. If she's always mugging, always making faces, always trying to act, it means that she's insecure. Even when she is in complete repose, Grace Kelly gives you something to look at or something to anticipate. So far, she has only played leading women. She has yet to play the character about whom a whole film is built. That will be her big test. But I am sure she will come through it with flying colors. I hope to go through it with her, to make sure that she gets a rich role, not a tintype part in a celluloid soap opera."

Not long after seeing Hitchcock, I added George Seaton and Bill Perlberg to my collection of Grace Kelly analysts. As a director-producer team, they had made two of the pictures, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* and *Country Girl*, in which Grace Kelly worked on loan-out to Paramount. "She reminds me a lot of the girls at the Actors' Workshop in New York," Seaton said. "They're so intensely dedicated. Most of them feel that if they pick up a little dirt under their fingernails, that makes them solid artistically. Grace isn't like that, but she has the same kind of intensity. On the other hand, her intensity doesn't make her shoot her whole personality at you the first five minutes you see her on the screen. With other stars, five seconds after they're on, you've seen all the personality they've got. With Grace you see different angles of her as the part develops. When she first came to work in *Country Girl*, the gaffers and electricians thought her just another blonde, but as they got her full flavor, they fell for her. In the end they awarded her a plaque. Engraved on it was: 'To Grace Kelly. This will hold you until you get next year's Academy Award.'"

"The part of the wife in *Toko-Ri* wasn't big enough to attract an important star," Perlberg told me. "But there were a few spots in it which had to be right, and we needed more than just an ordinary actress who could get by with it. Our problem was to find an unknown with real talent. George and I interviewed a lot of girls. Among others we talked to was Grace. She wasn't putting on an act. I remember one girl who tried out for Bernadette. She wore a black dress and a six-inch crucifix. I remember girls who tried out for tart parts who showed up dressed like Sadie Thompson. Grace was dressed as if she were walking down the street window-shopping. She wore glasses and flat-heeled walking shoes."

Once Perlberg and Seaton met and talked to Grace Kelly, they felt that they had to have her. They figured that she had that devastating commodity, cool beauty with inner warmth. Luckily for them, as of October, 1953, there was no problem involved in borrowing her from Metro for cheap money. She was borrowable for twenty-five thousand. Her salary while she worked in *Toko-Ri* was ten thousand, so Metro cleared fifteen thousand on the loan-out.

"Now we cut to December, 1953, and January, 1954," Perlberg said. "We've got Jennifer Jones set for *Country Girl* when I get a call from her husband David Selznick. He tells

us Jennifer is pregnant, but he thinks we can finish the picture before her pregnancy begins to show. George and I don't tear our hair at the news. We just look at each other. We're both thinking the same thing at the same time: *Grace Kelly*."

It was only two and one half months since Perlberg and Seaton had finished *Toko-Ri*, but now, when they tried to borrow their *Toko-Ri* leading lady for *Country Girl*, Metro had "big plans for her." A spokesman for that studio told them, "This means that we have certain problems. If we're able to work them out, we'll let you know." Perlberg and Seaton had problems themselves. Bing Crosby for one. He was to play Grace Kelly's husband in the picture, but he wasn't sold on her. Finally he dumped the decision as to whether she could do a satisfactory job in Perlberg's and Seaton's collective lap. "Somehow, we let Grace know we were negotiating for her," Perlberg told me, winking at the word "somehow." "And somehow, she got a copy of the *Country Girl* script. No court on earth can make us tell how she got it. Just say that I suspect Seaton and he suspects me."

Grace Kelly hadn't asked for the part, but ten of the most important women stars in Hollywood had put on a feverish campaign for it. Place cards were shifted at dinners so that actresses could sit next to Perlberg or Seaton. Other actresses got Mrs. Perlberg and Mrs. Seaton off into corners at cocktail parties or pressured them over supermarket pushcarts. Still other candidates persuaded columnists to plug them for the role.

"If I listed all of those who tried, you wouldn't believe it," Perlberg told me. "But to get back to borrowing Grace. Finally we told her, 'Metro won't let us have you.'"

"'Why not?' she asked.

"'They're making a thing called *Green Fire* and they want you for it,' we said. 'It's rumored that Eleanor Parker walked out on it, and Robert Taylor won't have anything to do with it, but they want you for it anyhow. However, we'll keep on trying.'"

Seaton and Perlberg vow that they're not quite sure what happened next, but they have a sneaking idea that Grace Kelly leaped out of her dressing room into the nearest telephone booth, put in a call for her agent, Lew Wasserman, and told him, in tones that scratched his eardrums, "You've got to persuade Metro to let me play this part or I'm getting on a train and going back to New York." Be that as it may, it is certain that, flanked by Wasserman, she went to see Metro's head man,

## Answers to Where Do You Think You Are?

(Page 58)

1. Vermont
2. South Dakota
3. Missouri
4. Arkansas
5. Utah
6. Oklahoma
7. Kansas
8. Kentucky
9. Maryland
10. Tennessee
11. Maine
12. Washington



Dore Schary, and together they worked things out.

"Her price has now gone up to fifty thousand, however," Perilberg told me, "plus a penalty of five grand a day if we keep her beyond the date when the Green Fire company is supposed to go on location. As for Bing, after a week of working with her, he told us, 'I'll never open my big mouth to you two about a casting problem again. I'm sorry I had any reservations about this girl. She's great.'"

I figured that the time had come for me to talk to Grace Kelly herself. I'd found out what a number of other people thought about her. It seemed a good idea to find out what she thought of herself.

When we sat down to talk, her face was expressionless. I saw only the surface of her eyes, not into them. She was poised, cool, collected and wary. She said nothing—unless I asked her a question first. Once or twice, even when I put a direct query to her, she smiled and didn't answer. However, little by little, she began to come out from behind her private Iron Curtain.

She said that when she met Fred Zinnemann, who had directed her in her first Hollywood venture, *High Noon*, he had given her some kindly advice. "You ought to learn how to speak to people and what to say to them when you meet them," he said. Later, she discovered that such advice from Zinnemann had its hilarious aspect, for he himself is so shy that after those sage words, he had almost nothing to say. To make things even clammier, they were both working with Gary Cooper, who had been known for years as the Hollywood actor least likely to be chatty. It was only after Cooper's discovery that Grace was even shyer than he that his talk moved out of a mumble, and he made so bold as to take her to lunch.

No unusual twist in the Grace Kelly story was involved in her becoming a member of the cast of *High Noon*. It was simply that, rated off her performance in one Broadway play, *The Father*, and her countless appearances before the slowly moving and ruthless eyes of TV cameras, her agents convinced those who were casting the film that the Philadelphia girl—who has since been described by one picture maker as having "stainless-steel insides" and who reminds another of "a cool stream in a mountain hide-away"—was a good bet.

I asked her how she happened to appear in the test Fox had made of her, the test which had had such a profound influence upon her life. "After a brief appearance in *Fourteen Hours*," she said, "Metro offered me a stock contract. Other studios did, too, but I wasn't interested. I could earn more modeling. Also, I wanted to try my luck on Broadway. I read for so many plays I lost count of them. People were confused about my type, but they agreed on one thing: I was in the 'too' category—'too tall,' 'too leggy,' 'too chinny.'"

About that time she was studying acting with Sandy Meisner, who not only taught dramatics at the Neighborhood Playhouse but classes on the side. One day she was starting for her class when the Fox New York office called to say, "We want you to come over and see one of our directors, Gregory Ratoff. He's going to direct a movie called *Taxi*. He wants to test you for it." She wore an old skirt and an old shirt. Her hair wasn't curled. She was minus make-up. But she said, "I'll stop by."

When she walked in, a man from her agency was there. "All the other girls looked cute and sweet in high heels," she told me. "I looked so terrible, my agent was embarrassed. But when Mr. Ratoff saw me, he said, 'Perfect.' This was a switch. My whole life people had been telling me I was imperfect. 'What I like about this girl is she's not pretty,' Mr. Ratoff said. My agent insisted, 'But, Mr. Ratoff, she is pretty.' Mr. Ratoff would not be talked out of it. 'No, no, no, she is not!' he said. . . . 'Take off your coat.'"

"When I unveiled and he saw my old shirt and skirt, he was in ecstasy. 'Magnificent,' he said. 'Cannot you spik with an Irish accent?'" Apparently this was what was expected of her, and although she'd never spoken with an Irish accent, she said, 'Of course.' Then she went home and worked on it. After the test was made, Ratoff wanted her for *Taxi*, but the man who produced it didn't although Fox had a contract all ready for her to sign. So that was that. However, John Ford, who was directing Mo-

gambo, saw the Fox test and decided she'd do for his picture. "Mogambo had three things that interested me," she said. "John Ford, Clark Gable and a trip to Africa with expenses paid. If Mogambo had been made in Arizona, I wouldn't have done it."

I asked her about an anecdote which had been given quite a play in the press. It had to do with her knitting a pair of socks for Clark Gable and hanging them on his tent, on Christmas morning, while they were on location for



**Mogambo.** The way it had actually happened was different from the printed version—as such things have a way of being. She had tried to knit a pair of socks for Gable, but, like many another knitter with good intentions, she hadn't finished them in time. "When I realized that I wasn't going to make it, we were out in Tanganyika, in the middle of nowhere," she told me, "and I couldn't buy anything for him. So I stole a pair of his own socks. Each day I stole something else from him. On Christmas Eve I filled one of his socks with his own things and hung it up. It was a silly gesture, but he liked it. I am very fond of Clark."

I had heard that while the Mogambo company was on location, Gable had got a cable from a London columnist, and had read it to Grace. It said: **RUMORS SWEEPING ENGLAND ABOUT YOUR ROMANCE WITH GRACE KELLY. PLEASE CABLE CONFIRMATION OR DENIAL.** "This," said Gable, "is the greatest compliment I've ever had. I'm old enough to be your father."

I'm not too good at the sly remark and the personal probe, but I tried anyhow. "I should think he would have been able to overcome that feeling," I said.

Once more she smiled and didn't say anything.

But she was forthright enough about the way she felt about Hollywood. "At times I think I actually hate Hollywood," she said. "I have many acquaintances here, but few friends. Asking a friend to dinner here is such a thing. It involves a complicated phone call or an even more complicated telegraphic invitation. In New York you see your friends easily and with no falderal. In New York I actually see people on the street when I walk. Out here it's so unusual for anyone to use a sidewalk that not long ago when I took a walk, a policeman stopped me to ask me where I was going. I felt like a streetwalker. Fear covers everything out here like the smog. When I told a make-up man at Warner's, 'Not so much rouge, please,' he trembled. 'Mr. Warner sees the rushes,' he said. 'He might ask what happened to the rouge. You'll have to take it up with your director.'

"In New York you can go anywhere and people respect your privacy. In Hollywood, they don't. When Bing took me and my sister, Peggy, out to dinner, the papers made a circus out of it. Poor Bing. He couldn't relax and have a pleasant evening with eight photographers around him. We had to leave."

I asked her if anyone had told her they thought her aloof. "Lots of people

have," she said. "But until I know people, I can't give much of myself. A year ago, when people asked me, 'What about you?' I froze. I'm better now, but I'm still not cured." The first time she met Hitchcock she said she could think of nothing to say to him. She remembers, "In a horrible way it seemed funny to have my brain turn to stone."

I thought of a thing Alfred Hitchcock had told me. I'd said to him that I was hoping that he'd tell me a few human-interest stories about incidents which had occurred during the making of *To Catch a Thief*.

"Comes now the inevitable request for anecdotes," he told me reprovingly. "I had expected better of you. I have no anecdotes about Grace. To create anecdotes, people must do either silly things or funny things. Of course, there are the kind of phony anecdotes the publicity man assigned to the unit thinks up, but the really funny things one does or says do not happen on schedule. Anecdotes grow with the years, like the rings on a tree. And Grace hasn't many years. However, she has a quality which is far more important. She can play comedy not only sexily but elegantly. It's a quality most women do not have. It has already taken her a long way. It may even take her to the top."