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P172

BABES ON BROADWAY

Adapted by
FRANCES BARBOUR
from the MGM Picture Starring
Mickey Rooney

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Tommy Williams ....Mickey Rooney
Penny Morris .....Judy Garland
Miss Jones .....Fay Bainter
Barbara Jo .....Virginia Weidler
Ray Lambert .....Ray McDonald
Morton Hammond ....Richard Quine
Mr. Stone .....Donald Meek
Alexander Woollcott ....By Himself
Nick .....Luis Alberni

CHAPTER ONE

It was noon hour. Broadway was coming to life for the day.

In and out of the Pitt-Astor drug store one saw an endless parade of aspirants to acting fame. Somewhere among these young people from all over the country, there were the future theatre stars of tomorrow, the George M. Cohans, the Katherine Cornells, the Lunts and Fontannes.

They were the great army of believers. Without them, Broadway would have been just another highway for their hopes and paved its streets with magic, their ambitions had lighted it with fame.

All over New York City, there were hundreds of them, looking, hoping, praying . . . weary, hungry and homesick. Most of them would have been satisfied with anything—four simple lines and a cup of coffee. No part could be too small, no possibility too remote. They had amazing capacities for disappointing these young people. The same rounds over and over again. Nothing today, nothing tomorrow, nothing yesterday.

But they would keep on dreaming and struggling and believing for the theatre was their heaven and their goal. To get there, they were often humble, they acted in hallways, and—like Tommy Williams who had been away from his home in Wisconsin for a year now—they sang and danced in cellars.

At the moment though, Nick's cellar spaghetti joint was distressingly empty as Tommy, along with his pals Ray and Hammy, went through their sassy college routine, laughing, singing, stepping high—and wondering about the future.

* * *

Tommy glanced around the place. "Do you think the audience likes us?"

"I don't know," Ray returned, "but thank goodness they outnumbered us."

Tommy nodded and once again, glanced curiously at the pleasant, middleaged woman, who had been coming there six nights in a row. She was a nice "icky" he thought, prob'ly from some little town like Waterbury. But then, anybody would be nice who showed that much appreciation for the Three Musical Balls of Fire.

Their act came to an end with a flourish and they danced off to the dressing room. Any minute now Nick would come in with the "kitty." Maybe one of the customers had put a dollar in it for a change. Boy, it sure would be nice to get a job some day with a salary attached to it.

There was a knock on the door and Nick, the proprietor entered. His round, double chinned face was sorrowful. "Boys," he said heavily, "I wanta you should resign."

They all stared and Tommy said, "You mean quit working here? No sir, Nick. We love you. We're not going to leave you down in this cellar by yourself every night."

Nick sighed tragically. "Then I got to fire you." Affectionately, he shushed them. "Look, I gotta da biz, I gotta da wife, I gotta da kids, I gotta myself, I gotta you. Yes?"

"Yes," they said. This was all irrefutable truth.

Nick shrugged. "But I gotta only four customers to eat da spaghett. So I gotta go outta biz."

That set the boys back on their heels. Without hope, Tommy looked into the "kitty" which Nick had brought with him. There was a nickel, a dime, a quarter and — Tommy's eyes bulged—a five dollar bill. "Hey," he yelled, what's this? Who put this five bucks in?"

* * *

Nobody could even hazard a guess. Then Tommy said, startled, "Couldn't be the 'icky' from Waterbury?" He understood. "She probably thought it was a buck. We'll have to give it back."

Hammy and Ray let out stricken cries.

Tommy though, was at the door. Lovingly, he looked at the bill. "Hate to do it fellows but things aren't that tough. I better hurry though before my stomach starts talking to my will power." Outside, he headed for the table of their benefactress. "I'm afraid you made a mistake lady," he grinned. "We found this bill in the 'kitty'."

She adjusted her glasses and looked at it. "Anything wrong with it? The 'kitty' says you take everything."

A feather would have knocked Tommy down. "You mean you . . ." Then he laughed self consciously. "Gee, that's a pretty big admission just to watch us. You can see the best show on Broadway for four-forty."

"I think your show is as good as some I've seen on Broadway," was the reply.

Delighted, Tommy sat down. "You do, eh? Well, we think so too but the out of town trade doesn't generally appreciate us. Where you from? I mean what part of the country?"

"Well, I was born in Wisconsin, but . . ."

Tommy almost turned a handspring. "That's funny, I was born in Wisconsin too. My mother still lives there." He smiled at her happily. "You know you're like Mom. She always says God made New York so the good people would appreciate Wisconsin."

* * *

Now Hammy and Ray joined him. Tommy made introductions and their new friend told them that HER name was Miss Jones. Interrupting each other, they regaled her with the story of their ambitions, how they were tryin' and tryin' and some day their names were going to be up in lights—boom!—and they'd be all set.

Miss Jones rose to leave and Tommy handed her one of their professional cards. "Well, Miss Jones from Wisconsin you've been darned nice to us and if you want anybody to show you around the town or anything just let me know. I'm Tommy Williams. Call me any time, at the Pitt-Astor Drug Store. It's the actor's clearing house."

Smiling benignly, Miss Jones nodded. "That's very kind, Tommy, I'm much obliged to you and . . . don't be surprised. You may be hearing from me."

That night the boys feasted on salami, candy and fruit. Then Tommy, feeling happier than he had in days, wrote home to his mother.

"Dear Mom: Our act was a sensation tonight and I think we're getting too big for the place."

He chewed on his pencil. Hammy was practising his favorite speech from "Hamlet" and Ray was going over a new song. From down below, in the corner shooting gallery, there was the crackle of rifle shots.

Tommy adjusted his ear muffs and wrote on: "But don't worry, something good will turn up and when it does I'll let you know and you'll be glad you had confidence in me. I miss you a lot Mom—especially at night when the city is quiet before I go to bed."

There was another loud outburst from the shooting gallery.

Tommy sighed and laboriously finished up: "Love, Tommy."

* * *

The next morning, he and the boys drifted into the Pitt-Astor. The place was already crowded. Everyone was reading the theatre news and trying to look important.

All at once, Tommy noticed a girl in one of the booths. She had bright coppery hair and a turned -up nose. Something clicked. He liked her and he didn't know why.

She looked up and he caught her eye. For a moment her lashes flickered. Then, in utter disdain, she turned away.

Tommy got mad, all to himself. "Well, if that's the way she feels about a guy like me . . ."

"What'll it be boys?" Shorty, the counter man asked.

Automatically, they went through their routine. Tommy asked for steak, Ray for fried chicken and Hammy for broiled squab.

"Three ham on rye," Shorty sang out. "Heavy on the ham." He turned back. "Oh by the way, Tommy, there was a call for you guys."

"A call?"

"Yeah. The Thornton Reed office."

"Thornton Reed!" Hammy yelled. He jumped to his feet.

Tommy pulled him down. "Take it easy bud." Then he spoke to his informant. "Don't you think it's a little warm for those jokes?"

Shorty hoisted his shoulders. He was used to "at leisure" actors. "The dame said Thornton Reed productions and wants you to get up to the office before one o'clock."

The boys looked at each other, then at Shorty increduously.

Finally, Ray made a decision. "Well, what can we lose? We've been turned down by every shoestring producer. It won't hurt any more to be turned down by the top guy in the business."

This seemed to make sense, but as they were leaving, Tommy turned back and said darkly. "Listen, Shorty, if this is a gag, you've made your last banana split. Don't forget that."

He adjusted his hat jauntily, then started off after the boys.

(Is this really a practical joke as Tommy thinks or is there a "break" around the corner for the boys? And what part will the young lady with whom Tommy was flirting, play in his life? Don't miss the next exciting chapter.)

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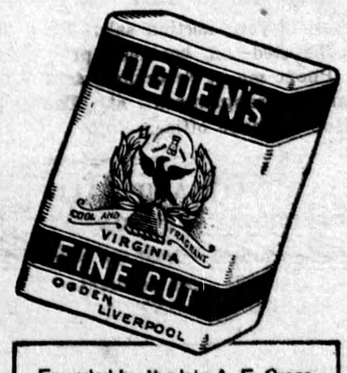

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ON GUARD

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Pattern 4909 is available in women's sizes 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48 and 50. Size 36 takes 4 yards 35-inch fabric.

Send twenty cents (20c) in coins (stamps cannot be accepted) for this Anne Adams pattern to Room 421, 73 Adelaide St. West, Toronto. Write plainly size, name, address and style number.

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ISSUE 7—'42

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Pity Poor Brides

The United States is cooking up some bad news for brides—no more dinners out of cans. An impending order will prohibit the use of tin for packaging almost everything that can be marketed in some other type of container. Among the casualties, it was reported, will be such old reliables as pork and beans, spaghetti, canned meat and beer — not to mention dog food.

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No Covered Wagon For This Traveller

It was a recently arrived European who called at the Information Office of the Canadian National Railways in Bonaventure Station, and inquired: "At what hour can I leave for Cleveland?"

"By Buffalo?" countered the Information Clerk having in mind variations in routing.

"Oh, no, by train," responded the would-be traveller.

Watch Your Furs

Don't let fur coats get matted and rumpled. The surest remedy is to have a small-sized turkish towel kept ready on the shelf in the coat closet for the exclusive purpose of brushing your coat.

At least once a week, wipe the entire coat, inside and out, brushing the fur gently with long strokes in one direction. Go over the whole coat—back, front, collar and sleeves. You will be surprised at the amount of dust that will collect on the turkish towel, and also at the beautiful gloss of the fur after its brushing.

On special occasions, if you want to look really elegant, have another person go over the coat the last thing after you have put it on.

'Sheeing' or 'Skeeing' Is Outdoor Problem

Crown Prince Olaf, of Norway, is responsible for a problem now interesting Canadian skiers, whether to "skee" or to "shee." Prince Olaf, himself an enthusiast of the downhill and trail, raised the question after a journey over the Canadian National Railways from the popular ski grounds near Huntsville, Ontario. Asked for the proper pronunciation of the word now in daily use throughout the snow belts of Canada and the United States, His Royal Highness suggested "shee" rather than "skee," adding that "shee" is Norwegian while "skee" is German in origin.

Dogs of War

Los Angeles' most distinguished dogs have hitherto been screen stars, says Time. Many of them are in the army now. To guard Los Angeles harbor defences, twenty-five dogs are being trained to walk post with sentries, sniff out spies and saboteurs. More than 1,000 dog owners, including Rin Tin Tin III, have offered the services of their pets. Dogs of war must be: (1) big; (2) intelligent. Best types: German shepherds, Doberman pinschers.

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