A black and white photograph of Hollywoodland. The word 'HOLLYWOODLAND' is written in large, white, block letters across the top of a hill. Below the sign, a large, white, multi-story building is visible. In the foreground, a winding road curves to the left. A dark vintage car is driving away from the viewer on the road, and another vintage car is visible further down the road. The background shows a hilly landscape with sparse vegetation.

HOLLYWOODLAND

TUI LORRAINE IN LA LA LAND

A NEW ZEALANDER INSIDE
CLARA BOW'S HOLLYWOOD

by Tui Lorraine Bow
edited by Ian St George

**TUI
LORRAINE
IN
LA LA LAND**

A NEW ZEALANDER INSIDE
CLARA BOW'S HOLLYWOOD

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edited by Ian St George

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Tui Lorraine Bow by Melbourne Spurr.

Melbourne Spurr arrived in Hollywood around 1917. Despite almost total deafness, he gained employment with the noted photographer Fred Hartsook, taking portraits of early film stars. By the mid-1920s he was considered one of the best celebrity portrait photographers in the world.

So few of the young have wisdom.

—Tui Lorraine Bow.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I began looking into Tui Lorraine's story as one subject of a series of notes I was putting together on New Zealand born silent movie actors - a neglected group of brave young men and women who departed for Britain or the United States, often via Australia, in the early 20th century, to seek fame and fortune in the pictures.

I followed her story via *Papers Past* in New Zealand, *Newspapers.com* in The United States - where her relationship with Clara and her father Bob Bow was sensation fodder for a few years - then *Trove* in Australia.

I contacted Clara Bow's biographer, David Stemm, who told me he had had several long phone calls with Tui when he was writing *Runnin' Wild*. Furthermore, she had sent him the typescript of an autobiography, a copy of which he had deposited in the Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

For me to access that copy I would need permission from the copyright holder. Tui died in 1993, so her will (if it exists) was not yet accessible. I would have to trace her family. My Australian friend and genealogy expert Ann Collins did just that and we identified Victor Fodor as the oldest surviving relative: he is the grandson of Tui's brother Owen and his wife Eva. Victor gave permission for me to obtain a copy and to publish it.

He told me, "My grandmother used to work for side-shows at the fairs in Australia and she got me some work there when I was a child: tin can alley, twins joined at the neck, ghost trains & mini bike policeman. She would write me a note to show the people running the rides at the shows that I was her grandson and could they please give him (me) a free ride."

I thus wish to record my sincere thanks to David Stemm, Ann Collins and Victor Fodor.

I also thank Genevieve Maxwell, Senior Reference Librarian at the Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills, California.

In 2024 it will be a hundred years since the eighteen year old Tui Lorraine, a singer, dancer, tight rope walker, contortionist, ukulele and guitar player in the New Zealand side shows, embarked on the *Maunganui*, bound for Hollywood, to be in the pictures.

This is her story.

INTRODUCTION

TUI'S TINSELTOWN MEMORIES

By Graham Bicknell,
Are Media Pty Limited /*Woman's Day*
31 May 1993 page 114: reprinted with permission.

New Zealander Tui Bow was there, more than 60 years ago, during the golden age of Hollywood.

Gary Cooper would walk into Tui Bow's house at any time of the day or night, Clark Gable often refused to pay for lunch and it was best for a young girl to keep out of Charlie Chaplin's way. At 85, Tui Bow remembers it all.

They were the great days of Hollywood, when it was a dusty town a few kilometres from Los Angeles and the stars - Gable, Greta Garbo, Clara Bow, Joan Crawford, and a diminutive New Zealander named Tui Lorraine - were all members of the clan.

Few people alive today remember how it was, says Tui, who lives in a tiny cottage in suburban Brisbane. Surrounded by hundreds of photographs, Tui said "Woman's Day" had caught up with her just in time.

"The memory's fading, dear," she said, but there is plenty of life in the veteran actress. Tui still catches the bus to town most days to have lunch - and even a heavy fall recently hasn't slowed her much.

Schooled in show-business in New Zealand by her mother, Tui was an accomplished actress, tightrope-walker, singer and acrobat when she arrived in America alone in 1924 while still in her teens.

And she walked straight into the greatest Hollywood era, when stars were truly treated as idols. It still amazes her.

"I walked into San Francisco and took the train down to Los Angeles and nothing even remotely looked like happening to me. I went to a casting place in Hollywood and, because I could do all those things, they said I'd be good for serials and westerns, so they sent me out to Universal Studios.

“They signed me up on the spot for 12 months on a fairly good salary. Mind you, I had to work like a woman possessed. But I never looked back.

“I was in serials and there’d be 18 episodes of each one, so it took nearly a damned year. I made several westerns; I can’t remember what they were – it has been more than 50 years.”

But she remembers her friends the stars, particularly Clara Bow, the “It” girl and one of the first glamor girls of Hollywood. The two were like sisters and shared a house in Beverly Hills, although the relationship changed when Tui married Clara’s father, at the star’s insistence.

“Clara was a beautiful girl, but she had a tragic life. I think the world was fascinated by her. She was a great actress who spoke like a ditch-digger and came from Brooklyn.

“Clara’s mother was insane and had tried to kill Clara several times when she was a child. Clara had a bed half the size of her room and she would ask me to sleep with her because she’d often have nightmares. Clara liked me because I came from a different place and had such a different background. Then her father took a liking at me.

“In those days the world really did make idols of movie stars and Clara was one. Her fan mail, frankly, used to disgust me. In the end, living with Clara was a bit like being a babysitter.

“I even married her father at her request. He was more like the father I’d never had but in the end I got sick of the Bows. Then Clara drifted off and married a two-bit cowboy actor, Rex Bell. He married her because of her name, but that sort of thing was prevalent then; there was nothing unusual about it.”

Tui looked aghast when asked if she was thrilled to have Gary Cooper constantly at the house while he was having a wild affair with Clara.

“No, of course not! Gary and I worked for the same studio and Clara had a big crush on him, but to have him come around was nothing out of the ordinary for me.”

It was Tui's natural honesty and perhaps her innocence which made her so popular with the big names. Greta Garbo used to call her "my little vawn".

"Did I know Garbo?" she asked incredulously. "Look at those photographs," she says. "You'll never see anything like those anywhere else in Australia."

"Greta gave them to me, and that was pretty unusual. She wouldn't give anything to anyone - she was the meanest woman. She never liked anyone in America, or America itself for that matter, but she liked me because, as she said, she came from near the North Pole and I was from near the South Pole."

Whenever she saw me, she'd take me into her arms and hug me. I was always a little worried about that - Momma had warned me about people who took a fancy to me."

Tui liked Clark Gable, but she was never overly impressed with the "Gone With The Wind" star.

"Gable came along a while after me. He was mean, too. It was a joke around the studio that you didn't go to lunch with Gable unless you had plenty of money. He always wanted you to pay for a meal."

Tui spoke more glowingly of Jean Harlow.

"She was magnificent and loved by everyone who knew her. She was kind and generous and gentle, nothing like the myths that were built around her."

Charlie Chaplin cast his eyes over the young Tui on many occasions, but she much preferred his brother Syd.

"Syd was a lovely man, nothing at all like Charlie. Anything over 12 was regarded as fair game by Charlie."

Before the legendary team of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy was formed, Tui was Laurel's leading woman in several minor Hollywood films. She was very fond of him.

"I knew John Gilbert... that rat. He was only 40 when he died (in 1936) and I knew him well, but I couldn't stand him. He was a bastard. Clara used to drag me along to his house when he invited her so she wouldn't get raped."

Tui says they were all part of a tight little Hollywood clan. “But it’s all gone now. Hollywood reached its zenith then and it has never been the same since. I wouldn’t like to see it now. It has been ruined.”

This was published on 31 May 1993; Tui Lorraine Bow died on 25 March 1993, so did not see her interview in print.

STAR CROSS’D

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes,

A pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life.

—Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*. Prologue.

Tui Lorraine Bow made autobiographical notes and gave a copy of a 234 page typescript (with handwritten corrections) to Clara Bow’s biographer, David Stenn. She called it *The Mourning After: Memories of a Star-Crossed Spirit*. Stenn donated a copy to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles. Clearly, from its content, she intended it for publication, but whether or not she actually submitted it is not known.

“Star-crossed” may suggest star-struck or even star-studded but properly refers to lovers whose bond is intended by fate but is thwarted by other people. Tui’s title suggests ennui, the nostalgia of melancholy, lost love, sadness, regret and a sense of injustice, albeit in a spirited woman. It also means hangover. Her chronicle confirms the double entendre.

It is an enchanting account of considerable insight, exploratory inquisitiveness, delight in new experiences, excitement in new places, by a restless soul who is, contrariwise, an innocent abroad, naïve and accepting. For a kid brought up on the road, abused by and separated from her mother, she was remarkably well read and uses an extensive vocabulary (she had attended a convent in Christchurch for a time and was an avid reader).

Her prose is occasionally Mills & Boonish (“I rushed to his side”), clichéd, yet sometimes surprisingly fresh and evocative.

The humour is colloquial to say the least, at times corny, at times subtle and disarming. She calls a spade a spade: “Ever one to use a bit of bad language to get rid of nerves or bad temper, I felt much better,” she writes. One newspaper wrote that her “vocabulary runs from bizarre to explosive”.

If she casually drops the names of famous people, it is because she knew them – “my very dear friend” is movie star speak indeed, so she may or may not have known them well – and she is intensely gossipy, superficial yet sometimes very moving, naïve but wise.

Tui was the child of an abusive parent and much of the self-destructive quality of her behaviour – including her devoted loyalty to her mother – can be attributed to that. She turned readily to booze, an alcoholic from alcoholic forebears, but like so many alcoholics, blessed (or cursed) with astute perceptiveness about human nature and its flaws and foibles.

She never knew her father and had to defend herself against the sexual advances of one step-father, Harry Cahill. For some reason she never mentions her next step-father by name (Roger Ginders). Like Marilyn Monroe in the movie *Blonde*, she sought older and more powerful men as friends and lovers, openly admitting she needed a father figure. It worked for a while.

Is this a carefree romp through the golden years of Hollywood? Yes, an uproarious account but with the vulnerability and insight to tell it with poignancy, some pride, some shame, some sadness and, most of the time, deep empathy. Happy? Hmm, perhaps not so much.

Above all, it is honest. She informs us, “although there is an occasional detail I have to leave out to protect myself and others, I’ve written the truth as I’ve seen it”. If indeed she does tell the truth, she thereby scotches a few cherished Hollywood myths.

THE MOURNING AFTER: MEMORIES OF A STAR CROSSED SPIRIT

written by
TUI LORRAINE BOW
1974-1976

dedicated to the three I loved most in life
Glory, Wave & Sol.

NEW ZEALAND

CHAPTER ONE

“She ees a bloody vild cat that one; needs a strong han’.” The big handsome Frenchman fell back on his pillows. “Come leetle Francoise, geeve Papa kees like seesters and brodder.”

His head ached, his smile was a failure, the hangover worsening by the minute. Now he glared balefully at his spindle-legged youngest daughter, who balefully glared back, ducking out of reach behind her eldest sister. The three older children could have kicked her. Dutifully they’d all kissed Papa’s thick black beard and received their monthly reward - a bright new sovereign. They then stood aside while their father tried to entice Francoise to him. She had been considered too young to visit him previously and this, her first meeting with Papa was not a success - but this rebellious skinny, huge eyed kid was to dominate my life; I loved her greatly - my mother.

Theodore Espagne shifted restlessly in his bed, bade his four offspring a vague adieu, then fitfully tried to sleep it off. His feisty little Irish wife from County Cork had banished him long since. Bridget Espagne, nee O’Gorman had suffered his excessive drinking and gambling, mostly on race horses, but when in a rage he dared to strike her, that was the end - literally. He left at her

request never to return or be forgiven. She refused ever to see him again, even on his death bed, but consented to these monthly visits.

Per generous remittance from French relatives, Theodore was quite well-off and he'd wisely invested in real estate, owning a string of pubs, race horses and several shops in High Street, the main drag of Hawera, North Island, New Zealand. Finally he settled there, as far from France as possible, a situation much desired by his relatives. The country benefited greatly by his spending sprees; I'm told he was a very gay blade indeed, which made his marriage to the poker-backed, straight-laced Bridget almost weird in its incongruity. Money can work miracles - sometimes. These pieces of early family history were told me by my mother, Glory Frances Espagne, who was considerably younger than her two sisters and brother; she lived a longer life than any of them and an adventurous one.

My earliest memories are kaleidoscopic - being a toddler at Mama's knees as she taught me my first song, dodging underfoot running back and forth along a passage between the bedroom and kitchen while my youngest brother was being born. I was damn curious about all the fuss. There is a hazy memory of seeming the star boarder in a hostel my mother briefly ran for railway men, between Show periods. Above all I remember the pungent smell of canvas, the glitter and glow of lovely costumes and the hustle and bustle of people bursting to be ready for the opening parade of the circus... and there sat Mama, a dark beauty on a glorious prancing white horse, both proud as hell - stunning. Vaguely I remember my small heart beating fast as I stood at the back entrance, glowing with pride - my Mama!

Soon after this my early training began - first the hoops and glasses and contortion work. Nearly all circus children began in this way. Hoops and glasses was the balancing of a glass of water on the forehead whilst contorting the body through hoops, hopefully without drenching oneself - not quite as simple as it sounds, especially for tiny children, but good training for

balance. My mother, the proud beauty on the horse and the skinny rebellious kid, of course, were one and the same and she remained rebellious and outcast from her family all her life, which was spent entirely in show business until she was too old to cope. During the early days, she changed her name from Frances to Glory and we called her that from then on.

By the time the baby mists were clearing from my mind I found myself staying with grandmama Espagne, who was known always as Nanny. I don't remember arriving, but I stayed there for some time. From time to time Nanny let drop scraps of information - my mother was travelling with Barton's circus, I had three brothers, one of whom was in a home, Valetta who lived with us was my older sister. Valletta was a beautiful, angelic soul, but seemed to be what today is called spastic. She had always lived with Nanny, who cared for her with loving devotion until death separated them.

I can accurately pinpoint the time of my stay at Nanny's home in Hawera, for one day, while sitting up a crab apple tree, my favourite spot in Nanny's garden, I noticed a knot of people staring at a tall pole on the pavement outside the fence. I slid down out of the gnarled old tree and ever curious, went to investigate. The people were reading a notice tacked to the pole; I waited until I could squeeze through, then saw the three big black letters - WAR! I don't recall that it changed our life much inside the house, but I remember the people around that notice were solemn and subdued, the ladies cried and the men swore softly through pale lips. It was, of course, 1914.

A year or two slipped by uneventfully, for me. I liked being with Nanny, the crab apple tree and the garden which she loved. I would climb atop the seemingly tall back fence to chatter to the little girl next door, who often gave me sweets, stolen, I gathered, from her parents' sweets and fruit shop. That didn't bother me, for few of life's sweet things came my way then, but it was paradise to what was to come later. Most kids see things larger than life, the fence seemed tall and the house looked huge, but

it was scarcely more than a cottage. Years later, on a sentimental journey to see it, I had to smile when I thought of the frightened hurry along the endless passage, past the dark bathroom and bedrooms to the large, warm kitchen and pantry. There was no electricity; we used oil lamps and candles.

The evenings were very cosy, usually spent in Nanny's study, where a small, but warm, coal fire danced in the tiny grate.

Also in the household was an outsider, a friend and lodger of Nanny's, the elderly Mrs Mendelsohn, whose son lived outside San Francisco - a very far off place to me then - where he managed a small hotel near Seal Rocks. Although living meagrely, Mrs Mendelsohn certainly was not poor. Each night she lovingly counted the handful of gold sovereigns kept in a small bag tied around her neck; the counting was her pleasure and by today's standards [illegible].

Looking back on my long life I think I could have added quite a number of "characters" to my beloved Charles Dickens' collection - my older sister, Valetta, was so beautiful, and (I know it sounds corny, but it's the truth) had the disposition called saintly; her affliction was almost totally incapacitating but she caused no trouble at all. She was nearly blind, but when awake seemed to be in perpetual motion, sitting on a chair rocking back and forth, her hands playing with a piece of string or ribbon. She felt her way along the passage to the drawing room where she sat by the hour playing the piano after her fashion. It's strange, but I can't recall whether she could hold a conversation or not; she was unable to care for herself at all, and Nanny loved her better than anything in the world.

I asked Nanny why Valetta was that way and she told me when Valetta was a baby she had been struck on the head with an object made of hard clay by her - my - mother. I was greatly shocked and much later asked Mama if this was true; she denied it, saying Valetta had been born with water on the brain. In view of incidents later confided by my mother, I find it difficult to believe either of them entirely.¹

Although Nanny had a good income from the rents of shops and other real estate, she lived frugally. She was descended from the Nordic Irish and Scandinavians are notoriously frugal. Our food was plain but nourishing - no luxuries crept in. I guess grandfather had frightened her with his spendthrift ways. He had made a gift of a property next door for the building of a church and convent in Victoria Street. He was a generous man, but neither Nanny nor his family, who owned large vineyards in the French Pyrenees could overlook his drunkenness. It took eight strong men to contain him when he was in the violent throes of delirium tremens - hence his presence "down under" far from France. Poor Theodore - he died of cancer of the throat when my mother was quite small. He was not overly lamented. Personally I've a soft spot for him, sight unseen. Nanny was aloof, indefatigable and unrelenting - but what backbone!

Her life had always been eventful and busy. Aside from her sister who lived next door, many members of her family immigrated from Cork to America due to the worsening relations between the British and Southern Ireland and the final blow - a potato famine. Nanny sallied forth on the good sailing ship *Pegasus* in the 1860s - a seamstress, she continued to ply her needle until marrying Theodore. It soon became evident she would have to run the business and she did so with acumen, also bringing up four children more or less successfully - with perhaps one notable exception.

As a small child I had an open and loving nature, but being left so much to my own devices at Nanny's I became rather withdrawn and later became a loner - a common condition in today's insane world.

It was a time of wanting to know and questions, but unfortunately one didn't take such liberties with Nanny. I wasn't afraid of her but she was aloof and while loving her, I held her in awe. So, like many small children, I set about discovering the facts of life among those my own age. I gather this fascinating event was taking place, with two or three others, in Nanny's

woodshed, when in she walked, scattering us like leaves in the wind. The upshot of this was my banishment back to Mama, who already had been informed it was time she looked to my education in all forms. It was a shame, for with all the explorations, I was still no wiser, nor did I remember my mother. There had never been a mention of a father, so I just guessed I didn't have one and they say you don't miss what you never had. Regarding a father, this has remained the case for me, for I had a number of stepfathers and like myriads of little girls, remember them with distaste.

Nanny remained more aloof than ever after the woodshed "caper" and soon informed me I was to go on a long journey alone, to my mother. That lone, long journey was to be the first of many journeys in my life, most of them alone. Thinking back of this trip I realise how the human animal has regressed today. The disappearance of so many tiny children, only to be found later, sexually assaulted and murdered is frightening. I may have been alone much of my life, but if anybody has had a more conscientious and overworked guardian angel, I'd sure be surprised. But I've also had so many narrow escapes from numerous dangers, it is truly incredible; of course, there were those from which I didn't escape but they come later.

CHAPTER TWO

I remember little of my departure from Nanny's secure and serene domain, nor of the journey which followed, except the boat crossing between New Zealand's north and south islands. Entrusted to the guards with a note pinned to my clothes, I was put onto a train from Hawera to Wellington, the night ferry crossing on the *Maori* or *Wahine* ferry to Lyttleton, the train journey through the long tunnel to Christchurch, then changing trains to a tiny township called Methven.

The story really starts now, for the shock I received on my arrival made me remember what followed very clearly. As my

mother walked quickly along the platform to kiss me and take my hand, I noticed a tall slender man standing apart, watching us. My mother led me over to him and said,

“This is your father, Tui, call him Dad.”

As he bent to kiss my cheek, I was frozen with horror and fear for he was black. Dazed and confused by the long journey and the shock of meeting a black father of whom I’d been told nothing, I followed them across the railway lines and a road and entered a tiny two-room shack, spotlessly clean, sparsely furnished and with a hard earthen floor. Mother’s shelf of beautifully shining silver stood out like a sore thumb. There was a cot behind the door in the kitchen for me and a three quarter bed and a children’s cot in the other room under a little altar to Our Lady. My two brothers, who also were white, slept in the cot and the adults in the three quarter bed.

I looked around and thought longingly of Nanny’s cosy home, sitting by the crackling fire listening to her tales of the Maori war, when she and a few pioneers had been in Wanganui. She told us how an old Maori chieftain, with his face covered in tattoos, in full Maori regalia, plus staff, would come to her hotel for a drink and chat with her. He was a Hau Hau (a person somewhat feared) and grunted with each step he took. He told Nanny he had eaten white people (long white pig), but he preferred ordinary pig as white man was too salty. I used to shudder deliciously when Nanny told of her adventures in the often gory early days. I’d not seen many Maoris until this time as there were only a few around Hawera; I was to meet know and love many Maoris later and remember them all my life.

However, “Dad” was not a Maori – they are Polynesians – he was a more than half-caste Australian Aboriginal, known as Queensland Harry and purported to be the world’s greatest buckjump rider. Seeing him ride much later, I realised this was a fact. He rode without a saddle, using only a bridle without a bit, or sometimes nothing at all. Often he would walk up to a horse which had never been touched before, much less ridden,

throw a skinny, long leg over its back and grasping a black handful of mane, ride the horse to a standstill.² Glory had a great passion for horses, and obviously, for the men who rode them well. I guess this interest stemmed from her father who devotedly loved his racehorses.

Queensland Harry was almost revered for his horsemanship and his name had spread throughout New Zealand. He'd been the star of Barton's circus, from Australia; Glory had run away with the circus and married him. At the time of this escapade she became shunned and ignored by her immediate family, which was highly respected. I guess she was considered pretty wild and to them, this mésalliance was a disaster.

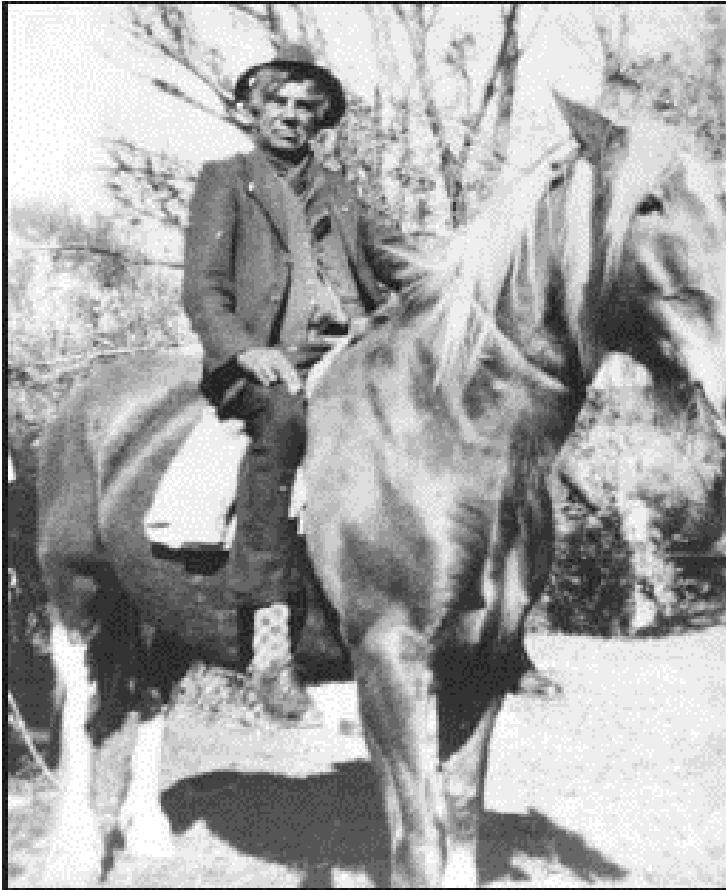
Barton's circus had returned to Australia, but without Glory, her two sons and husband. Glory hadn't wanted to go to Australia, so they left the show and tried to settle down in this small town. If the township was small, the district certainly wasn't - situated on the Canterbury Plains there were many large stations and farming districts which mainly dealt in the breeding of thoroughbred horses which needed breaking. Queensland Harry was much sought after for this chore, many station owners bringing their horses miles to have them broken by "the world's best buck jump rider". Unfortunately Queensland Harry was a victim of the bottle and the flattery of men so his work was sporadic at best. The elder of my two brothers, Glory and I, suffered countless drunken beatings and harrowing nights through Queensland Harry's drinking problems.

It was around 1916; vaguely I knew there was a war - but, oh, so far away. In fairness to the people of the day, racism didn't seem to exist as a social barrier, except, as always with the unthinking cruelty of kids at school - "What's it like to have a black father, yah!" It seems strange that with the passing of more than half a century racists and racism appear more bitter. I had no reason to like, let alone love, Harry, but I've known many white men all over the world who were infinitely more diabolical. He was raised and well educated by white people in Queensland,

Australia and, but for the bottle and undue flattery, might have been a decent human being – he also should have stayed in showbusiness, but I believe my mother wanted to make a good, stable home for we three children and eventually bring my other brother out from the “home”. She sent money for his support, but in those poverty-stricken days, it was tough enough with three kids, so I was never to know that brother. His life was a lonely, sad one, I heard much later and too late.

Queensland Harry’s contributions towards housekeeping were not reliable, so many of the burdens of keeping us in food and clothing fell to Glory, who was always a battler. She was very musical, played piano and violin and had a glorious voice, but seldom sang, preferring to play the piano. She took on a few pupils and also played for the farewell dances for our “beloved boys” going off to fight the war to end all wars, and supplied the mood music for the weekly silent picture show. This was the beginning of my early passion for movies and everything to do with them. When playing for the pictures and dances, she always took me with her; I sat on a straight-backed chair next to the piano, my feet falling far short of the floor, but go to sleep? Never! The ham in me was already at work. The Anzacs made a fuss of me and I lapped it up, but it was the movies I loved – Charlie Chaplin, “Fatty” Arbuckle, Mabel Normand (Glory’s favourite) and the wonderful Mary Pickford (mine). The list is endless, Wally Reid, Tom Mix, Bill Hart, Nazimova and the Gish sisters – I looked forward to that night most of all.

Glory was a good mother, struggling always to keep us clothed and fed. The Sergeant of Police at Methven was a kindly man, who, I think, felt sorry for us, as often he had to take Queensland Harry away for the night to stop him from cruelly beating Glory and, when I ran to her, me. Most of the fights were because Glory would go to the hotel and abuse him for not coming home.



Queensland Harry Cahill

The sergeant often chatted to Glory over the fence and he kindly gave her his cast-off blue serge trousers which she cut down to make trousers for my brothers. I remember her year after year, sitting up late at night, painstakingly hand sewing all our clothes, using anything she could get her hands on to make me pretty little things. She managed so well because of her long,

slender, beautiful hands and the flair she inherited from her French ancestry. Often dawn would break and still she would be sitting, working by the meagre light of a candle. Her eyes finally failed and her last few years were spent in near total darkness.

Food was often short in Methven and this she also skilfully managed; it was there I was introduced to sheephead soup - very cheap and extremely nourishing, made with many kinds of natural vegetables. During mushroom season we two older children were hurried off before daylight, in bare feet (boots were precious and saved for school and good wear) to the great sheep paddocks in search of the delicious delicacies. The fields were white with frost and bitterly cold, but we rushed about, calling to tell each other of our finds, seeming not to notice the chill. Not too far away were those glorious snow capped Southern Alps surrounding hoary old Mount Cook, forever frowning down from their midst. As the morning sun smote him, he seemed to soften a trifle, as, well-loaded, we would scamper home knowing Mum would have a warm and tasty breakfast waiting before we were packed off to school.

It was during these early days at Methven that Glory began shouldering me with advanced responsibility, mostly out of necessity then, but the burdens continued throughout most of her life, but it wasn't all one-sided. I loved her and intensely felt all her sorrows, ever wanting to please - and there were lighter sides to our lives.

One of our greatest amusements was birdnesting in the nearby pine forests; not realising the damage we were doing, we put tiny holes in either end of the eggs and blew out the contents, then strung the varieties together, making a necklace. These forays were not always without incident, even downright adventure. One exciting day we came across a number of lovely big eggs nestled in a nest on the ground - just sitting there for the taking. Gleefully we raced off home with our "booty" and, after blowing them, added them to our prize collection. Shortly afterwards a very irate land owner arrived at our hut, spitting a

few choice words at Glory about her “flock” cavorting among his precious pines and stealing his eggs. He had just cause – they were the eggs of his prize turkey, which he resembled remarkably in his apoplectic outrage. The birds were allowed to roam at will for, although the forest looked huge to us, it probably wasn’t much more than a few acres.

That put an end to our birdnesting there, but the cemetery wasn’t too far away and I loved hunting for eggs there and lying on the thick, fragrant carpet of pine needles, listening to the wind whispering through the trees, watching the clouds scurrying by, with hardly a thought for those lying below the ground nearby.

Shortly after our arrival at this hamlet, I awoke one night, feverish and ill. A streak of moonlight penetrated the room through a crack in the door – in my feverish state I thought it was a man standing there, holding a bright sword; I must have screamed in my delirium – it was more than a week before I consciously knew anything. A doctor had been called and had diagnosed brain fever, which kept me in bed for many weeks. I believe the shock of meeting Queensland Harry was to blame for this because of my sensitive and imaginative nature – I lived in a fantasy world of my own making.

School was quite a long walk from home, but the compensations for me were divine; our walk took us past the yard of an extraordinarily kind and generous farmer who always had dozens of young animals, especially around spring time. I’d already proved to be a born mad animal lover, for which I’m grateful – they fill the gaps of loneliness for so many of us and so often we are undeserving of their devotion. I’d spoken to the farmer many times, hanging over the gate to pat the puppies and lambs. On my way home one day the farmer asked if I’d like a lamb for a pet – I was ecstatic. He tied a piece of rope around the lamb’s neck and “Bunty” docilely followed me home – the first of a long stream of beautiful pets with which I’ve been blessed throughout a long and roaming existence.



The Convent of Mercy at Methven in 1913, the original school.

Glory was a bird lover and had acquired a couple of speckled Wyandotte hens because they laid brown eggs, a treat we all loved. However our stay at Methven was coming to an end and a few months later Glory took my hand, sat me near her and told me the butcher was willing to buy Bunty. I was to take him to the shop, collect a pound, and bring it home. I couldn't believe my ears - my beloved pet, whom I'd fed with a baby bottle, who loved, trusted and followed me everywhere? I started to cry but was told to get going. It was already dark and dear little Bunty trustingly followed me to his doom.

I cried all the way there and I know the butcher was sorry, but he brusquely pushed two half-sovereigns into my hand and let me take a tearful farewell. Still crying loudly, I slunk home, feeling exactly as Judas must have.

Going to school next day I saw the farmer and told him tearfully about Bunty. He surely was a good man and said,

“Don't cry any more. I've a lovely surprise for you; call in on your way home.”

The day seemed to drag on endlessly, but finally I was at his gate, calling excitedly that I was ready. Smiling and holding something behind his back, he strolled over.

“Close your eyes for a moment,” he commanded.

With my eyes tightly shut I heard a squeaking noise, so opened them quickly to see the most beautiful little shaggy coated puppy I've ever seen. It was a male from the litter of one of his prize sheep dogs, just old enough to leave its mother. I can only say I was in seventh heaven. Glory allowed me to keep him, although he was another mouth to feed, but Toss was irresistible and I loved him madly.

I asked Glory why we had to move on and it seemed the war was beginning to catch up on us, Queensland Harry might be called up and Glory couldn't face that. She never could bear to be alone. It was a very real fear to her, one which stemmed from rejection as a child, and only faded a little at the end of her life. She still played for the farewell dances and silent movies, but Queensland Harry was now drinking more and more heavily and spending most of his time in the hotel. Rows were endless, with Glory illogically blaming the publican.

I was frightened of the hotel, but not for that reason. There were no funeral parlours in the district then and when men not from the district were killed in accidents while working on the farms, there would have been no place to put them had not the "big hearted" publican, who got most of their money anyway, allowed the police to put their bodies in the barn out the back, while a rough coffin was made. Rumours were rife in the district about the sickening things which went on in that barn and, of course, they were gleefully whispered in the school yard. The facts eventually came to light and the system of storing bodies was changed abruptly. Huge rats had been in the barn, devouring hunks of flesh from the corpses - very nasty, but true.

CHAPTER THREE

The "back blocks" of the South Island were extremely rugged with very few exceptions. Motor cars were a novelty, with the horse and cart still doing duty as the prime form of transport. The magnificent Clydesdales pulled the produce and beer-

wagons over rough and cobbled village streets. Passing years have dimmed only a little the sweet scent, sounds and scenes of those solid days, but it does seem now to me to have been on a different planet and I guess, in a way, it was.

The war in Europe dragged on, becoming more and more vicious, devouring men like meat in a huge mincer. Suddenly we were gone from Methven to a station away from any village. The cottage we now occupied was surrounded with shrubbery, flax and toi toi bushes. We played with wooden tops, whipping them with plaited flax whips, to make them spin. The cottage was on a large flat plain, far from neighbours; a dray and horses was our only means of transport. Their wheel tracks seemed to go endlessly across the flatness. Queensland Harry was employed here, doing some work involving horses.

Many of my memories of this place were blotted out or overshadowed by an incident I was forced to witness here. Apparently Harry was called up into the army, confirming Glory's fear of being left alone.³ One morning she sent my two small brothers to play a little distance from the house, took me aside and handed me a strip of chintz and said in a shaking voice,

“Tui, go out to the back yard. Dad is going to cut off some of his fingers so he won't have to go to war. I want you to tie this around his hand after he's done it. I can't do it - I'm too nervous. Now be a good girl and don't cry.”

I was scared dumb and too paralysed with fear to cry. I went out to the chopping block and, sure enough, there was Queensland Harry, axe in hand, trying to work up the courage to do the deed. He called to my mother, but she sobbed back that she couldn't face it - a pattern I was to know well about the poor soul throughout her life. It must have been a macabre sight - a small frightened child, glued to the spot, watching the tall, thin black man holding an axe, laying the first two fingers of his right hand on the chopping block, his intention obvious.

Abruptly, the axe swished through the air, blood spurted and the fingers were off. Petrified as I was, gingerly I tried to tie the

stiff piece of chintz around the dripping hand, but my little fingers were shaking too much. Taking it from me, Harry wrapped his own hand. The fingers were severed quite close to the hand, above the second joints. Glory came out to help him inside and then wrapped his hand properly. I stole away behind some bushes and was violently sick.

I don't know what became of the fingers, but Glory quickly harnessed the horses to the dray, calling me to help her and drove Harry the many miles to the doctor, leaving me to care for the two boys. Their story was that he had fallen from the dray and the fingers were severed when the iron wheels passed over them; few, including the doctor, believed this as the wounds were too sharp and clean, so we made a hasty departure from the district.

We moved to a nice old cottage in the outer part of Christchurch. It was surrounded by beautiful and fragrant flowers, which were to become quite necessary to our budget. Queensland Harry's hand would take quite awhile to heal, so it was up to Glory's nimble fingers and brain - and my "fronting" - to get us by. The flowers were put to good use - violets, pansies, jonquils, oh, I think we had all the lovely spring flowers - were endlessly picked, counted, and bunched ready for sale by Glory, Owen and I. When they were ready the part I disliked most came. I had to walk the streets and door to door, selling the precious blooms. I was very young, but old enough to have the beginnings of feelings of shame and embarrassment at the begging quality of the errand... obviously I wasn't cut out to be a saleslady. This is the first time I remember actually disliking something I had to do, but I did it, for from this time, Harry, with nothing better to do, usually arrived home nasty tempered with a goodly load of liquor inside his tight, black hide, which always served to inflame his lust and cruelty. Intensely disliking my older brother and me, he spared not the rod.

Glory's intercessions gained her only the same treatment as they also fought about his long sessions at the pub, his constant

drunkenness and his lack of providing for the family. Owen's and my beseeching him not to hit Mum, only enraged him more - completely insane in his rage, he cut a willow stick and beat Owen and me around the buttocks and legs unmercifully, causing severe bruising which lasted for weeks. We screamed and pleaded for mercy, but he usually ended with,

"I'll kill the fucking lot of you," and he meant it.

Drink and men's adulation because of his uncanny prowess with horses had swelled his head out of all proportion. My brother and I both suffered from vascular problems in our lower body into adult life - of course, it was due to the beatings. Perhaps there is a place in the Dreamtime for his sort; I hope it's the right one.

Sometimes we ran away, to hide, trembling, in the hedge, but he always found us and then the thrashing would be more vicious. I think Glory had a little trouble sometimes from the authorities, who wanted to take us away, but she wouldn't let us go and, as she was married to him in those days little could be done. I don't know why she didn't leave him - he almost killed her before she did permanently leave him, but I guess a psychiatrist could have a lot of fun figuring out the motives.

We weren't in Christchurch long before we were on the move again - this time to a beautiful, large and elegant station owned by Sir Godfrey Hall - a very kind, considerate and understanding gentleman. The property was on the Canterbury Plains and from there we once more had a glorious view of the Southern Alps and the imposing Mount Cook. The nearest village, several miles away, was Hororata. While we were here the war ended, but as luck would have it I was in bed with the chicken pox, so couldn't go to the village to join the festivities. I was consoled only by snuggling into bed reading the *Last of the Mohicans* and devouring some wonderful "pinched" fruit from Sir Godfrey's extensive orchards.

Daily I was becoming more withdrawn; just prior to our arrival at this place two events occurred to add to my growing

insecurity. Upon return from an unimportant errand one day I found my beloved dog, Toss, had been sold to an old farmer who had keenly wanted him for some time. Again, money was the lure as he brought six pounds, big money then. I was heartbroken once more - he had been a loving and faithful constant companion. By this time, however, I was mentally maturing beyond my years; I didn't show my grief, but cried myself to sleep silently and alone. I became introverted, living in a fantasy world of my own.

The other unpleasant thing which was becoming apparent was that Queensland Harry began trying to molest me during his drunken bouts, as well as beating me. He came home drunk, started to bash Glory, who would run away to hide close by if possible - and then he turned his most unwelcome attentions to me. By a great deal of dodging, running and my little brother's presence, I escaped rape, but it was a miracle. I told Glory and after this she took me with her on her flights into the night. Taking my large scout knife, I assured her I would protect us both from this fiend; it was absurd, of course, but this all served to bring Glory and me close in love and shared fears. With me it lasted a lifetime, and with her, to some degree, I'm sure.

Queensland Harry's job at Sir Godfrey's station was to break in a mob of extra fine horses. He caught and partially broke a feisty medium sized pony for Sir Godfrey's son, giving the wretched thing to me to ride miles to school with the purpose of finishing the process - that was what we thought, but Toa's ideas were quite different. He nearly broke me in two on many occasions. What a fiend: I heard later he was never properly broken and never ridden after I left.

Our small house was at the main entrance gate to the winding private road which led to the big homestead about half a mile away. Although we were miles from a pub, Harry managed to get there frequently, so continued to be drunk most of the time. I think the boss was getting rather sick of this, but as it was the end came suddenly one awful night. Inflamed with booze and

rage, he once more swiped at Glory and me; luckily the gig and pony were hitched ready to be used outside, so we ran to it, taking off like the wind towards the homestead and, hopefully, help.

Sir Godfrey kindly asked us in and he and Glory were discussing what we should do, when, with a pounding of hooves, Harry arrived and immediately began punching Glory. Startled, but gallant, Sir Godfrey tried to intervene, but he was helpless against a man insane with drink. I panicked, rushed to the gig and took off over a shockingly rough paddock, nearly breaking my neck and that of the horses in the process, vainly looking for help which wasn't there. Finally I returned to find our protector had been forced to produce a pistol to subdue the crazy drunk and had called the police. He had been kind and understanding, but had tired of the drunken sprees and cruelty of his "famous" stockman. As the police dragged him off, Harry screamed obscenities and threats of the vengeance he would wreak on us when free.

CHAPTER FOUR

This time we didn't wait; we packed the little we had and left the lovely, lonely place, going to a small town some distance from Hororata. We were in pretty poor circumstances, a woman alone, with three children to support and certainly nothing resembling social services, but as usual, Glory managed to find us a cottage, a little hammock for me and mattresses on the floor for herself and the two boys. No sooner had we moved in than we were all stricken with the world-wide post-war influenza epidemic. With only the aid of patent medicines and our strong constitutions, we all pulled through - there certainly wasn't money for a doctor. Staying only long enough to recuperate, we soon were on the move again.

As usual, somewhere along the way, Queensland Harry caught up with us, he and Glory reconciled and we began doing

a few outdoor shows, or fairs. Our only Transport was a horse drawn wagon. I remember vividly the eerie feeling as we drove at night, with just simple candle lamps either side of the wagon to light our lonely way. Often the roads were just the tracks of old earthquake cracks on which weird shadows were shown by the flickering light as we plodded through the night to some small lonely village to perform our little show.

These sorties were not continuous, as winter was approaching, which made it too cold for tent or outdoor showing. While we waited for the weather to warm up we settled into yet another cottage at Sydenham, an inner suburb of Christchurch, so we children could attend school on a regular basis. I was put to training for showbusiness on a much larger scale here. The time I spent going to a convent school was the happiest of a varied and often unhappy childhood - I loved school and the nuns, who were understanding, affectionate and helpful. Our stay in Christchurch ended up being much longer than at first thought.

S Y D E N H A M P I C T U R E S .
SPECIAL HOLIDAY ATTRACTIONS.

In Addition to our Two-Star Picture Programme we have engaged

The **AUSTRALIAN CHILD ARTIST,**
AUSTRALIAN CHILD ARTIST,
TUI LORRAINE CAHILL,
TUI LORRAINE CAHILL,

Fresh from her Australian Conquests,
Who will Sing the Latest Australian Success,
"GOOD-NIGHT, MR KANGAROO"

And "The Daughter of Mother Machree,"
The Pictures: "THE MAN WHO WON,"
Featuring Maurice Costello and Harry Morey,
and "THE VALLEY OF FEAR,"

A Sherlock Holmes Story by
CONAN DOYLE.

Holiday Prices. Commencing at 7.
NOTE.—Owing to unforeseen circumstances, Little Gladys Vincent, advertised to play To-night, will NOT appear.

Lyttelton Times 25 October 1920.⁴

Glory bought a small secondhand upright piano and began giving lessons again, but this time I was included. I was hopeless

at piano, but I loved singing and those lessons went well. I also attended a gymnasium to learn tumbling, acrobatics and contortion. I hated contortion, which I should have begun much earlier when my bones and body were more supple, but the rest I enjoyed. Another joy was learning tight rope walking on an old wire clothesline in our tiny back yard. It really wasn't taut enough, but it served.

Payments for the piano lessons kept us in funds while we prepared to hit the road, doing the agricultural and pastoral shows in summer. Winter shows were under cover, but there weren't many, so we did night shows in hired halls in the villages and towns throughout the country. Most of these variety shows were done by Glory and me - as the showbusiness expression goes, I "doubled in brass" so much it was tough to fit in the quick changes.⁵

Glory and Queensland Harry were immersed in plans with some Australian showmen, Captain Greenhalgh and his son Arthur, to present a monster rodeo at the Christchurch Showgrounds. The Greenhalghs were to put up the money for rental and advertising, but naturally Queensland Harry was the star attraction. To my surprise and consternation I was informed I would ride young bucking steers and horses over several jumps, neither feat as yet in my show repertoire: This, of course, was in the days when kids did as they were told by their elders, so I did it. The steers were young, all right, but they sure bucked a lot, frightening the hell out of me. Miraculously I managed to ride the horses over the jumps without falling off, but I attribute that to my learning to ride while I was very young.

The show was successful - a crowd of about ten thousand was there which was a big number for around 1921.⁶ Glory lost no time getting to the hotel where the Greenhalghs were staying, up to their rooms, hand out for the fee. Arthur began to argue about the agreed amount, trying to give her much less, but he'd met his match in Glory. The heavy gladstone bag which was crammed with the takings was lying on one of the beds, As the argument

hotted up, Glory grabbed the bag and fled from the room with Arthur in hot pursuit. He quickly came to heel and the agreed fee was handed over with no more argument.

As her French father commented after their first meeting, “She ees a bloody vild cat that vun.”

The fee - about seventy-five dollars - seemed a fortune to us and Glory used most of it in preparations for the showground run, while Queensland Harry virtually lived in the pub, being shouted drinks by his many admirers - his ego being inflated hugely.

I was fast learning many facets of the business - singing, playing the ukulele and guitar. One day, returning home on a street-car, I noticed a group of people standing around a prone figure on the pavement. I saw at once it was Queensland Harry lying there, so as I was nearly home, I dashed in to tell Glory. I stayed home while she ran out and up the street, to return later saying he had raced to grab a runaway horse and cart which was bolting madly and dangerously down the highway. His leg was badly broken and would take months to mend and might interfere considerably with his riding ability. This upset all our plans to join the showground circuit - Glory also was very upset, but you know the old saying about an ill wind.... I wasn't very sad about prolonging our stay in Christchurch and at the convent school I loved.

We stayed on for about a year, which was the longest period of formal education my brothers and I had. It was an attractive city with the Avon River, peaceful city square and the big drawcard for me, the Saturday afternoon matinees. Of course I hurried to the movies every chance I had, the film emulsion already deep in my blood - little realising that before long I was to know some of the people acting in them. If you can imagine the distance, lack of money or background, the seeming impossibility of such an undertaking back in 1921, with no airplanes, few ships and 10,000 miles separating Christchurch

from Hollywood, it would seem a silly notion. Just the same, New Zealand held many adventures for me before I left it.

CHAPTER FIVE.

I was about eleven years old when I received another emotional jolt from my adventuresome, but romantic Mama. For as long as I can remember I've had a very noticeable scar encircling my left leg, just above the knee; I'd asked Nanny about it, but I guess she thought I was too young to handle the truth, so she told me I had fallen on a soft drink bottle. (Does anybody remember those beautiful soda water bottles with the waisted top containing a plain glass marble? I sure do and I loved those bottles, so maybe that's why I was told that sort of glass was the culprit.) It wasn't.

Glory called me into her room one day; we were alone and she was crying and agitated. Putting her arm around my shoulder, she said,

"Tui, that cut on your leg - you didn't fall on a bottle - I did it with a razor."

Stunned and stricken, I started crying too. She continued,

"Your father (naming him) was going to leave me. I tried everything I knew to stop him - you were just a baby and I was pregnant to him with Jackie - I had no money, no place to go and was demented, desperate with fear. We were staying in a hotel room; he was packing his bags while I threatened to kill myself and you, but he shrugged it off with the usual, 'don't be silly' bit. His razor was lying there near my hand, I snatched it up and hardly remember exactly what happened, but I had cut your little leg nearly off."⁷

By this time we were both sobbing convulsively, but I put my arms around her and told her I loved her and understood, which I really didn't. I could see she was very unhappy about it and didn't really have to tell me, so that was enough for me. She asked my forgiveness and I gave it readily and this incident never

made any difference to the sometimes happy, sometimes gloomy, now and then very angry sentiments between us. I always loved her and admired her guts – she was the greatest outdoor show person ever to come out of New Zealand, a fact that has been overlooked by the showmen of Australasia, for she passed away only in 1971 and to my knowledge nothing was mentioned about her, even in the *Outdoor Showmen* “rag”.

In New Zealand’s early days it was her good, bright, clean entertainment which gave some class to outdoor and outback showbiz. Back before I left for America it was many a long and weary mile we travelled by horse and dray to lonely little settlements and Maori Pas (villages) to bring some cheer and often the only news of the outside world. Understandably people came from miles around, although there would have been little, if any, billing (advanced publicity). We just arrived and put up our tent, or if the weather was bad, the Maoris or whites would rent us the hall in the village.

By this time I knew many Maori families well, they were dear friends of whom I was especially fond. They taught me their songs and I gained some knowledge of their language; although the passing years have dimmed my memory I remember a few of those lovely songs with nostalgia.

One never to be forgotten family were the Gurnicks and their children. The wife Annie was part Maori and husband Frank pakeha (white). We stayed with them at Ngaruawahia for awhile (where the waters meet the mighty Waikato River). Then, as now, a big regatta was held each St Patrick’s Day, 17th March; we show people put up our tents and showed on the bank of the river and it was glorious – I looked forward to it all year. The Maoris, colourful in full make-up and dressed in pue pues (grass skirts), feathered cloaks, the wahines with poi pois to perform the canoe dance and their beautiful, soulful singing. The big events of the day for the Maoris and spectators were the canoe races on the Waikato.

I've attended all types of mardi gras, parades and celebrations all over the world and nothing has ever been as exciting and brilliant for me as those early Ngaruawahia regattas. I knew, with much affection, Princess Te Paea, who taught and told me many of the Maori legends and I was privileged to come and go to her Pa as I chose, an honour extended to few pakehas. Although the Princess had been invited and had attended Buckingham Palace, she remained largely aloof from the pakehas, so alas, this was my first tiny hint of racial prejudice, almost unnoticed in New Zealand. Maoris and whites had been unaware of racism and I wish they'd remained so, not only in New Zealand, but everywhere.

Originally we'd come to know the Gurnicks whilst staying with friends nearby. I passed their home daily seeing, on a rug in the front yard, a beautiful baby girl; always laughing and playing in the sun with a few simple toys. Can't remember ever seeing a more beautiful child, dusky of skin, pink cheeked, huge blue eyes and glorious golden curls. Thru' talking to the babe I became acquainted with mother Annie and father Frank, the child's name was Mona. Gradually we became friends; Glory fell under their spell as did I and the next time passing thru' Ngaruawahia the Gurnicks asked us to stay with them for a few days; would to God we had not, but we did. Being winter a large pot of soup was brewing on the stove, Glory's special, the nourishing and tasty sheep's head variety. One chilly morning we had all breakfasted except Mona who was out in the sun. Bringing her in, Glory filled a small bowl with the steaming soup, held the lovely child on her lap and commenced to feed her. Mona had a slight cold and we wiped her pretty little nose frequently, but she was enjoying when without warning she coughed, choked making alarming noises. Glory and I being near patted her back thinking food had "gone the wrong route", but she continued struggling for breath because of choking. Annie rushed in; desperately we tried to dislodge whatever was choking our darling. A finger down her throat discovered a bone;

desperate attempts to dislodge it failed. Somebody ran for the doctor who only got there after Mona was unconscious, it was too late; he got the bone but Mona contracted pneumonia. We sat beside her all night praying for a turn for the better, but in the wee small hours, we all dozed simultaneously and she slipped away to join the cherubs for she looked exactly like one.

Annie let out a scream, looked at Glory and called out “Makutu” (a spell, witchcraft, hex etc.) and rushed from the room. Glory and I were bereft, crying with terrible grief. The time was before dawn, but Glory also left the house not to return till mid-morning. The funeral, almost the saddest I’ve ever attended, took place at a small Maori cemetery on a steep hillside not far from the village. The grieving father Frank had taken a shovel and alone dug his beautiful baby daughter’s grave. There was no “Tangi” (bereavement party) as such; we all just wept until there were no more tears. The following day we buried Mona, there was a large old Tourer (automobile); her little coffin was placed in the back. Annie, Frank, Glory and I piled in and drove her to her resting place. Today I still grieve wee Mona; many have come and gone in and out of my life and many have died, the memory of some will never fade.

The young and handsome Prince Notion Mahima, Princess Te Puaea’s nephew with whom I danced so gayly a few times, and with whom I was madly in love, to his great amusement as I was still in short sox, (nothing new about Bobby soxers) and he entering manhood, was to die very shortly from consumption, he also I’ve never forgotten whenever I think of Ngaruawahia a place I love deeply. Still - life went on. We had to leave our dear friends with their lonely grief and really got going in Outdoor Show-biz on a permanent basis.

Over a few short years we’d become acquainted with the Australian show people and certainly knew well the marvellous Circus families and performers, great, they really were. The Honeys and St. Leons, Wirths, Ridgeways, and fondly remembered Bobby Baker excellent wire walker, believe she is

in San Francisco hale and hearty now a business woman; we really are a hardy lot from those long gone days.

The Australian Outdoor Showmen who could afford it, came to New Zealand every summer to do the run of shows, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Meekin and their little girl Beryl, who was to become a big name in international Show-biz in later years and whom I saw recently in Sydney prosperous and looking incredibly young and well. The other name in Outdoor Show-biz was Greenhalgh; they also came: I've mentioned them previously. They consisted of Captain Greenhalgh, little Edie his daughter and Arthur the son. Arthur became better known later for his interest in horse racing owning a few, one in particular called True Leader.

**QUEENSLAND HARRY'S
WILD AUSTRALIA**

**Will be on your SHOW GROUNDS on
SHOW DAY.**

Don't fail to see Australia's Champion Buck-jump Rider and his team of Outlaws; also Bucking Bulls, Wire-walkers, Contortionists. The two Midget Bokers. See **JERRY** the Clown in his "Spanish Bull Fight"; also **KEN GARMONSWAY**, the young champion New Zealand rider.

See **QUEENSLAND HARRY** ride bare-back the Australian outlaw "Queensland." £10 will be given to any person bringing an outlaw to throw Queensland Harry.

See **TUI LORRAINE** and **OWEN** in the Honolulu Hula Whaka, the latest from the South Sea Islands.

See the Exhibition of **BOOMERANG** throwing.

Popular Prices.

Hawera & Normanby Star 11 November 1922.

By now we'd obtained a "Tin Lizzie" truck, a one ton model T Ford. It was up to me, who else? to learn to drive it. I did so in some paddock or other, nobody else could drive and I managed till Glory hired people to help in the show who could drive. Don't think Queensland Harry ever did - just as well. Yes, he was still with us "playing up" whenever possible tho' his "passes" at me had diminished for I was really starting to stand up for myself, but it was a sad life and I'd already, with dear Glory's help and permission of course, begun to plan a future life.

Keeping busy I'd trained two beautiful dogs my much loved Huia and Fairy, starting what was to be quite a grand "Troupe" after I'd gone; they were very clever and worked with a will. Huia a Maltese Poodle was my special pet slept on the foot of my bed seldom leaving me. Fairy a glorious animal was Glory's special favourite. What happiness to know the joy warmth and love of pets such as they. These dogs also worked to help keep us and themselves so deserve a special mention.

By this time I was a good all round performer, tight wire act I liked, not so contortion which I've stated was difficult and painful.⁸ I played steel guitar, ukulele and sang, things I was to do all my life, especially singing. Music is a big love now as then, without music I'd often be lost.

There were many narrow escapes on those awful roads, old Lizzie was faithful and resented the over-loading and resentful roads, also the four foot ten inch teenage driver pushing her beyond both their limits. Ask any old timer in New Zealand about the "Rangariris", an alleged "road", track more like, hanging on the side of a steep gorge and the roads over Mt. Messenger, also those thru' the King Country, a Prohibition stretch in those days, and the early road from the Waikato district to Auckland to name a few, ugh! they were ghastly. Mostly it was "everybody off" while Tui drives over the danger spots, and I'm no bloody heroine. Nearly drove into the drink instead of onto the Ferry, known as punts then, on numberless

occasions. Coming down a steep grade after leaving my birthplace Hawera, Taranaki, the floor boards under my feet jumped out of position due to the awful roads, slid forward and jammed all three pedals on dear old “Lizzie”; quick thinking for a youngster but doing the only thing possible I slewed the old girl into a road bank hitting with a helluva thud as she’d gained considerable speed, but better than going over the other side which fell away to a nasty drop, a very nasty drop I might add. In retrospect the aftermath must have been a ludicrously amusing spectacle. Barking dogs, show gear, pots and pans, a crumpled wheel, bent front axle and assorted human beings, pale ones at that, even Queensland Harry was “a Whiter Shade of Pale”, everything and everybody strewn all over the road. I felt sick and badly shaken, it was quite a job to drive that load all hours of the day and night for one so young believe me, but I’ve always had to do a lot of things beyond my strength and a gentle kick in the ass can toughen up a youngster if needed, and I was to need it believe me. I’m glad of it. Life was to demand much of me and as I’ve already said, I’m no bloody heroine.

QUEENSLAND HARRY’S World Entertainers will be showing on Saturday night, opposite Levin Hotel. Come and see the world’s greatest buck-jump rider riding bare-back the Australian outlaw, “Queensland.” £10 given to anyone bringing an outlaw to throw Queensland Harry. See Tui Lorraine, wire-walker, contortionist, song and dance artist. See the Honolulu entertainers. See the little Spanish bull fight Jerry the clown. Queensland Harry will buy all suitable outlaws. Refined show for ladies. Popular prices.⁹

We showed constantly those last few years. The A. & P. Shows in summer, the Town Halls, Maori Pas in winter, from one end and each side of New Zealand to the other. It was hard work but exciting travel as well as remunerative. My dear mother spent her spare time in endless sewing for my “going away”

wardrobe and saw to it that my savings went into the bank, for besides my show work, I also sold sweets to our audiences. Our target was one hundred pounds cash, plus ship and train fares to San Francisco, thence to Hollywood.

In early 1924 this target was reached and the date April 1st (when else) set for sailing from Auckland. The time was drawing near, I was both anxious and excited. I realise now that my mother let me go for two reasons; one, to halt the lecherous intentions Queensland Harry still displayed towards me when drunk and as I was growing into a pretty young person, he did not always need drink to make himself obnoxious. I was more than fed up, both with the work load and him, furthermore getting quite vocal about the matter and threatening to leave. Two, my mother was also fed up, guess she really thought I had enough talent to make the Hollywood scene, thence be able to help her and her menage. I also felt this, that I was her one hope and loving her dearly, determined to do my best. She made me pretty clothes, we went about procuring a Passport, obtaining passage third class, known as steerage then. I needed every penny for when I landed so fancy passage was out. The ship was the R.M.S. (Royal Mail Steamer) *Maunganui* sailing from Auckland to San Francisco on April 1st, ha, ha, ha, 1924 via Raratonga and Papeete, Tahiti.

We were again in the beautiful Waikato district when the sailing date drew near. I started saying goodbye to our large circle of show business friends. I had already made my adieus to Nanny in Hawera on the way up. She was kindly, but disapproving of my travelling so far alone and to Hollywood of all places. An avid reader of newspapers, she had not missed articles on the outrageous antics of Hollywood's famous citizens. When we stopped at Ngaruawahia for my last time, I went to the Princess Te Puea's lovely Pa to make my farewell. She wrote a little Maori message in my autograph book, affixing her own seal. It saddened me to say goodbye to her. Through the years she had been so kind to me and I was grateful and very fond of her.

After I left the Pa, I strolled down to the great Waikato River and sat on its green bank to think for awhile.... Although anxious now to be gone, I couldn't help wondering what lay ahead of me so far away. There was so much sadness in the early years, struggling to survive alone and I still remember the feel of hunger pains. I thought back to the war years and Glory's struggles to keep us all together, clothed and fed.

I remembered the first *Girls Own Annual* a friend of Glory's had given me for Christmas being flung, by a drunken and jealous Queensland Harry, into the roaring fire before I'd read a dozen pages. Shortly afterwards he also put an axe through my first ukulele, case and all. It had been saved for and bought for me by Glory. I still have the case, a reminder, but now it contains a very good Martin ukulele which I have played and accompanied myself on for many years. I thought also of the sadistic beatings, fleeing into the night, sometimes with our mother, hiding in the thick hedges of gorse or broom, sometimes in orchards or pine forests, not daring to return, until the drink Queensland Harry had taken wore off - but, still often facing the beating anyway.

Memories flooded in - of driving an overloaded lorrie all hours of day and night, often very late and often starting to doze at the wheel, for usually we had shown all day, then broken camp, packed and moved on for the next show. Glory, along with most other show people disliked staying in a place after the show was over.

I thought of the wrench ahead, parting from my mother, my beloved animals and the few friends. But being so young, I thought too of making a success of my career and thus bringing them happiness and prosperity.

A strand of lovely willow tree gently brushed my cheek. I caressed its cool leaves and gazed at the brooding, broad and deep stretch of water slowly, silently passing by. In my mind's eye, the glorious natural beauty so predominant in New Zealand, also passed before me. The crisp pre-dawn wonder of the snow-

capped Southern Alps, with towering Mount Cook, tossing back his silver white head, above them all. I could still feel the cold breeze rushing at me across the Canterbury Plains, as I stood and thirstily drank in the fantastic scene, before hurrying off to fetch the milch cow. This scene brought the memory of my mother, also in the pre-dawn, sneaking me out of the cottage, giving me a leg up to a double-bank ride with a male friend of hers on a horse to the railway station a few miles away. The train was to take me to Christchurch, where she had entered me in the Eisteddfod to recite *Napoleon's Tomb*. I did well, I think, but the memory is darkened by the terrible beating my mother and I received when I returned home.

Mist was slowly forming on the Waikato. The lovely willow shivered and so did I. The snowy peaks of the great ranges and vast plains of grass and tussocks receded, along with the empty feeling of lonely fear. The mist had wakened the excitement I always felt near Rotorua and its surrounding districts, Ohinemutu and Whakarewarewa. The Fairy Springs full of flashing Rainbow Trout. I closed my eyes and could hear the boiling mud slurping in the ground, could sniff the pungent odour of sulphur. Its smell has never been offensive to me and even now immediately transports me to the fascinating thermal regions of New Zealand's North Island. The beautiful carved Maori gates of Hinemoa and Tutanekei, whose sweet legend has probably faded into the mists of time, as have so many others. Even the language is now becoming rare in its full beauty as I heard it spoken and in the heart-rending songs I loved so dearly. The steam rising around the edges of Lake Rotorua was fascinating, but most thrilling of all was the rumbling noise, faint at first, but growing louder to herald the violent ground movement followed by the eruption of boiling water in the stunning old Pohutu Geyser. I would stand and watch this terrific sight as long as I was allowed and like "Old Faithful" at Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, the wait between

eruptions was always too long. Tourists were rare then and the glorious beauty of New Zealand untouched.

Late afternoon shadows were falling now and I shivered again, but still I could not tear myself away from this nostalgic reverie or my beloved Waikato river. My mind raced back to our early days in outdoor shows; struggling to get a start. Glory had managed to obtain a four-wheeled wagon and horses. Sometimes it took several days to travel the miles inland to reach the far off Pa's (Maori Villages) such as Tukaanu, on the western side of Lake Taupo a journey through earthquake cracks and rough roads. I was a child then, but remember arriving at dusk on a road which had some small metal patches and also many cracks from which steam was rising. The Maories in these all-Polynesian villages had seen few whites and were curious, but exceedingly friendly and hospitable. The village contained several boiling water and boiling mud pools. The natives used these for all their cooking needs, plaiting the lovely cool flax which abounded then, into kits or baskets in which to cook. A Tangi, equivalent to an Irish wake, was in its final stages; the eating, drinking and wailing almost over. Glory asked what had happened and a young woman (Wahine) told us a child-bride, probably sixteen or seventeen, had jumped into a fiercely boiling mud pool over a domestic problem. Within minutes not a trace of her was left.

Lazily my thoughts returned to the present and the King Country through which we had recently passed. A wild, beautiful centre to the North Island, with its glorious snow-capped mountains. One of them Ngauruhoe which so often turned on nature's fireworks, flinging fire, lava and ash hundreds of feet into the air. A night's train travel between Auckland and Wellington could be exciting and even frightening depending on dear old Ngauruhoe; a growling rumble and the surroundings suddenly and brilliantly lit by fire. The light ash would fall on everything, including the train, and infiltrate the carriages, dusting the occupants to an ageing grey.

With a shudder I thought of an incident at the last show we had done at Taihape, on New Years Day, 1924. A man named Andy Roghan had blundered into our tent where we were waiting to show, wild-eyed and cursing in the horrors of drunkenness. Some of our group managed to quieten him and manouver him outside, but it wasn't until a few weeks later that the full horror of the situation and realisation of our danger came to us. We found that exactly a year before, on New Year's Day, 1923, he had gruesomely murdered his friend and employee while his senses were inflamed by bad liquor. It was fortunate for our peace of mind we hadn't known at the time just how dangerous the poor, drink-sodden fellow was.

Evening had fallen and a wispy mist swirled around me, leaving a tiny drop of moisture on each leaf as if the willow tree was silently weeping for me in farewell and in a way these quiet moments alone by the river were my real farewell to New Zealand. Although I returned for many visits while I was living and working in Hollywood, I never again really thought of it as home. I started back to the camp where my family and friends were gathered around the campfire in a lively singsong. They pressed me to join them with my ukulele and voice and I did so gladly, because I loved to sing, especially the beautiful Maori songs. while in Hollywood I was to utilise this ability to play musical instruments and sing. When there were no acting jobs available I often kept myself in funds by singing, on radio and at one stage I had my own show.

The night was straining at the bit and I had much to do the next day so I excused myself to spend my second-last night in a pup-tent, with its sweet smelling straw. My cases were nearly all packed so I settled down to drift into a glowing dream of the fairy tales I still believed about the exciting life I was going to. I was to embark on the RMS *Maunganui* on April Fools Day, 1924, bound for San Francisco. I have often thought since that there should have been some warning in that day being chosen for my departure, but I experienced no forebodings then. All I could

think of was the brilliant enticing rainbow to which I would soon take my first steps.

CHAPTER SIX

Early the next morning my mother brought the small wardrobe she had so painstakingly made and gathered. My main piece of luggage was a wicker basket about four feet long and two feet wide. It was very strong and we had lined it with oilcloth to make it weatherproof. Two rings holding an iron rod and a small padlock closed it quite adequately. I still have that basket. It did a great deal of mileage and was of estimable value both practically and sentimentally. The basket, a small amount of hand luggage and my precious steel guitar and ukulele were packed. After tearful goodbyes to my brothers and the beloved dogs we left by train for Auckland.

Glory and I stayed in a hotel there for the next three or four days while we did the rounds saying goodbye to all my friends and acquaintances. The enormity of my undertaking was just beginning to hit me and I grew quiet and introspective. Although I had worked hard from a very early age and had already felt the burden of a great deal of responsibility, the distance frightened me. Ten thousand miles of ocean would separate me from all I knew and loved – in particular my mother.

The night before I sailed Glory introduced me to the second officer of the *Maunganui*, Mr W. Johnson. He had promised her he would keep an eye on me during the trip. Glory had known him for some time and to know “Johnny” was to trust him and like him immensely. He was a wonderful protector and I still feel very grateful for his innate goodness and decency towards an inexperienced girl. That night Glory and I lay in bed together and she spoke to me of many things – the evils of some men, too much drink and the dangers of “bad” people of both sexes. She spoke wisely and well as a mother to daughter. We

both cried buckets of tears. We have never been and never were to be again, as close as we were that night.

Next day we boarded the ship and, being in steerage, were taken below right to the bow of the ship. My cabin had four berths and as I was young and nimble I was assigned to an upper bunk. We were below the waterline, although there were portholes. Suddenly I was just a child again, clinging to Glory and crying. She pacified me saying if things didn't work out I could just come straight home again. Then I was alone, straining for a last glimpse of a wildly waving wet handkerchief. As we steamed out of Auckland harbour I little realised I would cross the Pacific Ocean a dozen times by ship before the advent of jet planes shrank the world so drastically.

Auckland Harbour had no bridge then and the town itself was just a sleepy little hollow, although it seemed a big city to us. At last we left the shore and as I looked back through tearful eyes I could for the first time really see why the first Maoris to see it had called it Aotearoa, meaning long white cloud. In my hand I grasped an envelope Glory had pressed there just as she was leaving. I decided to open it later as I was too upset and didn't want the other passengers to see me crying. In the cabin I set about arranging my few belongings, finding a special place for my musical instruments. Space was very cramped but we managed to fit everything in. The other women were there, also unpacking, so we introduced ourselves.

Johnny found me before long and took me on deck, explaining the routines, when best to bathe and eat. I felt better and very secure in his friendship. He promised to smuggle me onto the first-class deck at night so I could hear and see the little orchestra playing in the saloon. The thought of music bucked me up immensely and feeling better I began to notice the happenings around me. I had always been in love with the sea and whenever possible have lived within easy reach of it. I love, too, the smell of ships - real ships that toss and roll, caressed by the elements, sometimes serene and lovely, but often angry and

turbulent. Today one might as well be in a hotel or motel room as on the luxurious ocean liners doing the packaged cruises – wall to wall carpets, beds instead of bunks, plush dining rooms, lounges and bars and definitely no ship smell such as this one which was so dear to my nostrils. Even on deck the mystique is gone. Stabilizers, glass enclosures and all manner of homey comforts completely erase the glorious feeling of constant movement and freedom, the near mating of sea and sky and forever spoil the joy and excitement of going to sea in the early part of this century held for me.

The trip from Auckland to Raratonga was calm and free of incident. We had to stand off the island while a small boat brought a few native passengers aboard and took off mail and cargo, because there was no quay. The island was remote and almost untouched by Europeans. Only a very small native village was visible from the ship and we were not allowed ashore. During the short run from Raratonga to Tahiti I spoke to the natives who were travelling steerage. We spoke in English because our Polynesian didn't jibe, but we could communicate quite well. They were pearl divers and showed me many beautiful natural pearls, some of which were quite valuable. One man sold me twenty-three small imperfect stones for twenty-five shillings. He had a large true black pearl which he offered to let me have for one pound, I was young and pretty and I guess he, like most Polynesians, was kind and generous, but, though the pearl was beautiful I was afraid to part with the money. It was a pity; I still have my little string of pearls, but that black one would be very valuable today. It was the custom of the divers to take their pearls to Tahiti, where they traded them with Chinese merchants for staple foods, clothes and the inevitable liquor. Sometimes they remained on Tahiti instead of returning home.

As we drew closer to Tahiti, where we would stay a day and a night, I began bubbling over with excitement, Johnny had promised to take me ashore to see the sights. When he had taken me to the first class deck for the orchestra, we had stood

outside, watching and listening through the window. He had bent and kissed me pleasantly, then I sat in a deck chair, thrilling to the strains of *Macheta*, a Mexican song I love to this day. This and several other tunes played were new to me, but that was to be expected because the ship travelling back and forth to the United States was well up with the latest in fashions, When I thought it was time to go I made my way silently forward and below, sneaking into my dark cubby-hole of a bunk.

I refused all attempts by fellow passengers to induce me to play and sing for the company. I have usually been accustomed to performing in all sorts of places and at odd times, but I think I was just too interested in all that was happening around me. The site of whales, porpoises and flying-fish, and the occasional glimpse of the great, majestic albatross, flying south were fascinating. The nights entranced me even more. I have always loved the night skies, with the untouchable stars, the milky way, the gold and remote moon, but above all the southern cross. Often since, while returning south I have watched night after night for my first sight of the familiar southern cross and always that first sight brought a thrill.

The night before we were to berth at Papeete the ship was a hive of activity with sailors rushing around sorting out items of cargo. I was certain I wouldn't be able to sleep, but Johnny came down and said I'd better try or he'd leave me aboard. I left with alacrity and even my pleasant thoughts didn't keep me awake. I slept with the ease of the very young.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Next morning I was up early watching the sailors scurrying about on the foredeck and straining for the first glimpse of landfall, but I could see nothing but open water. One young sailor, with a smile, pointed ahead and slightly to the right. Excitedly I tried again and what had seemed an indistinct line of bluish white cloud was gradually becoming a rugged blob of lush

green. As we drew closer I could see the lines of coconut palms ringing the shore and distinguish one or two buildings. Some natives coming out to meet us in outrigger canoes were a delightful and romantic sight. Johnny came to tell me we were slightly ahead of schedule. He squeezed my arm and I blushed with the realisation that I was getting a crush on him. He was so handsome in his uniform and the whole atmosphere was very romantic. He told me we would be in Papeete until early next morning but as he would be busy during the day and I should go ashore and see the sights, staying close to the crowd from the ship. That night he would take me ashore to see the night life. He said this with a grin as well he might. The night life on those small islands in 1924 was certainly not to be compared with anything found in the big cities.

I needed no second bidding to go ashore. I couldn't wait to drink in all that beauty. Flowering shrubs and trees, coconut palms and smiling Polynesians abounded. A few two-storey buildings provided a place for quite a number of Chinese to do a thriving trade. The whole place was very lively, I believe even in 1924 there were more than three thousand assorted souls living there. It was to become even livelier at night, but how I wish I had known of the painter, Paul Gauguin that day. It would have been thrilling to have searched out the place in which he had lived and see some of the work he left behind. Despite the few wooden buildings Papeete was really just a small native village. Feeling tired and a bit lonely I returned to the ship with my small purchases, a native kit full of lovely big alligator pears, or as they are known now, avocados and a few picture postcards to send home.

Aboard ship I tasted the avocados for the first time and so did some of my shipmates, much to the delight of the stewards, for we ate little dinner that night. I still love those delicious, but fattening things, but there is now little chance of me getting fat on them. That native kit full of about a dozen cost me one

English shilling, but now, only in season, one miserable small, unripe pear costs about one Australian dollar.

After dinner Johnny came to collect me. We walked along the shore which was like something out of a romantic story book with the palms whispering in the breeze and the first glow of moonlight breaking the velvet darkness. Johnny's nearness awakened a feeling I had not known before. He had taken my arm and held it very firmly and suddenly he stopped, put his arms around me and kissed me on the lips. I was a little startled, but not afraid. Just as suddenly he stepped back from me, looked down and said, "Tui, you're jail-bait. I mustn't forget that, no matter how appealing you look." I know I blushed, for young as I was, I knew what he meant and was flattered. But Glory had schooled me well on the subject of sex and I still remembered the unpleasant advances of Queensland Harry, so I was relieved that Johnny refrained from trying to carry this any further.

By this time we had reached the outskirts of the village. There was little street lighting, but, oh boy, the ramshackle hotel and many of the huts were positively dancing, as were most of those inside, except for those enjoying themselves equally well brawling. Intermittent strains of music could be heard above the din. As Johnny and I passed the hotel there was a crash of breaking glass and a wooden chair came hurtling through the window onto the street in front of us. We hurried on across the street, as a tangled mass of fighting bodies followed it. As we walked quickly away Johnny explained that this type of thing was quite normal and expected when ships arrived in port. Even the few gendarmes were discreet and leaving bravery to the Foreign Legion, they took to the rugged hills behind the town until the night of fun and games was over. Johnny was an amusing story teller and had me laughing many times during the evening. He also gave me my first taste of champagne. I had never had a drink before, except perhaps a sip of stout from Glory's glass while eating fish and chips when I was a child. Johnny certainly knew the ropes and guided me to a comparatively quiet little bar,

where he ordered champagne. I was surprised and protested that it would be too costly. He laughed and said “You’re forgetting that this is a French settlement. Normally expensive French perfumes and champagne are very cheap.”

The waiter arrived to place the bottle and glasses on the table and I was really astounded when he said, “That will be two and six, sir.” It was really quite good champagne, too.

Next morning I awoke safely in my tiny bunk and realised we were on our way. I felt a trifle seedy and secretly wished Johnny had bought me perfume rather than champagne, which I rashly vowed I would never touch again. Up on deck I could make out only a few hazy spots on the horizon and they were well astern by now. Other spots were to be seen in the sky and these were growing larger and blacker by the minute. It wasn’t long before they were very large, low black clouds. Johnny saw me at the rail, came over and asked how I felt. I said brightly that I felt fine, but I could feel a faint flush tremble on my cheeks so I turned away to look at the water, but not before I noticed his cheeky grin. Then he glanced at the sky saying he thought we were in for a bit of a blow and hurried up to his station after making sure I went below. The ship began to toss and roll. I felt frightened and very alone as the wind rose and deep furrows showed in the rapidly darkening water. Johnny’s “bit of a blow” became a very nasty hurricane which built up to alarming proportions, pitching and tossing us furiously. The hatches were battened down and we were told to stay in or near our bunks, that being the safest place. The iron covers were screwed onto all portholes, but not before the glass in one higher up in the ship had given under the strain of the pounding seas. Waves were breaking over the ship, pounding deafeningly, and seepage below was providing enough water to paddle in. Being in the bow of the ship was something akin to a crazy big dipper ride at a fairground. Being young and pretty stupid I was not really afraid, only upset that my beloved ukulele and guitar had been found floating on a few inches of water on the floor of the cabin. I quickly rescued them and

secured them safely on my bunk. The gale continued to howl mournfully and so did some of the passengers. Most were extremely sea-sick, but luckily I didn't succumb and never have. I have never feared water, only fire, so in my youth I found all this excitement and adventure quite exhilarating. The storm screwed and raged for two days and nights. I missed no meals, but had few companions. Now and then I glimpsed Johnny, who waved, but obviously had no time to chat

Finally the wind and waves abated and that cramped, battered old deck looked like heaven to me. Johnny came down to see if I needed anything and, with the usual British understatement, allowed that it had really been quite a blow. Today, by any standards my reply would be unprintable, but then I just simpered. We were behind time and the old girl was steaming her head off to make up in what was then a long haul from Tahiti to San Francisco. We didn't sight another ship and the days passed slowly. The heat of the tropics was on us and we became torpid, losing count of time.

CHAPTER EIGHT

One morning early I went up on deck for some fresh air. I sat on a box and gazed back towards our wake. Thoughts of Glory brought tears to my eyes and I think if I could have, I'd have turned back at that moment. I started as Johnny spoke behind me,

"Tui, I wish you'd go below and stay in your cabin until I come for you."

I was surprised. He seemed quiet and subdued.

"Why Johnny?"

He explained a sea burial was about to take place. "A second class passenger has died. As we are running late due to the storm, the orders are to keep going at half speed instead of stopping the ship altogether. The body has been sewn in canvas and is all ready so it won't be long now."

I remonstrated, saying that I had seen death many times and would like to attend the burial, but Johnny seemed upset and anxious for me to go below. I obeyed, thinking how sad it was for someone to die way out here, away from loved ones and be so perfunctorily left to the lonely deep. But I was young and healthy, the sun was shining again so, being female and inquisitive I positioned myself in an alleyway with a porthole just under where the captain was conducting the funeral service. The canvas enshrouded body rushed past my eyes, hit the water and sank slightly astern. Although I was prepared for it, somehow I felt depressed; it was all so lonely and final. It wasn't a full ship, but those of us who could, decided to fade away. There were many places one could disappear in a ship lightly occupied. Naturally any signs of gaiety were out for the day.

After lunch I went to the bow and sat myself among some ropes and gear which hid me from view. I've always had an enquiring mind and I had much to ponder that day for Johnny had told me of another death on board. It was an aged millionaire from Chicago whose body was being kept on ice to be taken home for burial. At that time ice was just beginning to be used for such things and for domestic purposes. Before leaving New Zealand I had never seen a radio, just a few small crystal sets, most of them home made. I also saw my first saxophone on board, used by one of the members of the band. I was fascinated by its low moaning tone as I sat alone in the dark of the First-class deck and dreamed my juvenile dreams of fame and fortune in Hollywood.

A splashing sound made me peer over the side to see a large school of flying fish scintillating like diamonds as they flashed from side to side in and out of the water with the sunshine snatching at their hurried trail. They were dodging a small group of the ocean's playboys, dolphins or porpoises. In the distance three or four whales whooshed down, displaying their own private fountains, then with an almost frightening crash, struck their tails onto the surface of the ocean with unbelievable force.

They may have been teaching the young, who knows? But the thought brought a picture of Glory trying to thump the mechanics of playing the piano into my head, her voice lessons. My eyes filled with tears and my heart swelled with love as I saw her again, so tenderly and lovingly sewing until late at night just so we could be well clad. Her beautiful hands were seldom idle. With an effort I pushed the thoughts away. It was growing chilly and I wanted company so I hurried below.

We steamed on drearily through the tropics, crossing the equator with the ship turning on the King Neptune bit with gusto. I loved it madly that first time, but after the first half dozen of these equatorial antics I lost interest in later trips.

One morning on deck Johnny approached and said he'd like to have a talk with me that evening and would I come up after dinner. I agreed gladly, being more than a little in love with him by this time. He was personable, handsome in his uniform and very kind. Glory sure knew how to pick them, but always married the wrong ones. At eight p.m. I was waiting in a quiet corner of the upper deck. Johnny joined me shortly after and unfolded a couple of deck chairs. I was curious to hear what he had to say. I knew we were nearing U.S.A. now and felt a nervy thrill of excitement at the prospect of landing. Johnny looked concerned, saying,

“Tui, do you have a long dress with you?”

I looked down at the short sox and little girl dress I was wearing. I was still dressed as I had for school, but Glory had the foresight to pack one ankle length dress for me to wear when we landed. You see, we had to put up my age on the passport, but I was very baby-faced and it was going to be hard to camouflage my tender years. I told Johnny about the dress and that I held a return ticket with a visa for six months or a year, I forget which. At the turn of the century the United States had opened her doors to immigrants from Russia and southern Europe as well as several other countries, but after quite a few problems she had decided, too late, to be more discerning. By 1924 it was quite

difficult to obtain a permanent visa. There was also a waiting list of three years and I just couldn't wait that long.

"Damn," he said. "You might get away with it, but the immigration officials can be very tough. Never mind, kiddo, we'll try."

What Johnny also hadn't known was that the relative we had said was over the bay at Oakland and to whom I was supposed to be going, was another fiction. I wasn't going to any relative, I was heading straight for Hollywood with stars in my eyes.

Two days later I awakened to the sound of excited voices and footsteps hurrying topside. I joined them to see landfall fast approaching on our right. I think I must have been the most excited person there, but I was also a trifle scared. Gradually we entered the beautiful wide, empty harbour of San Francisco bay. There was no smog, bridge or fog, just blue sky and sea, with a few ships leaving. Johnny arrived and viewed my ankle-length dress with a grin, but said he hoped it would help. He had to go topside, but told me to go to the saloon when we berthed and try to get through as soon as possible. If I was successful I was to get ashore immediately and go for my life into the city where he would meet me at a certain hotel in the square.

CHAPTER NINE

I made a few farewells, but I hadn't made any close friends so I gathered my luggage and took it on deck without much trouble. I felt the slight bump as the ship touched the quay, watched the gangplank pushed into place and some officials board, disappearing smartly into the saloon. I lingered awhile to allow some of the other third-class passengers go ahead. I certainly didn't wish to be first. I waited until about ten minutes had elapsed, then, trying to look nonchalant, sauntered towards the saloon, quaking in every fibre. But I was an actress and depended on that to keep my fear from showing.

Entering I saw two queues in front of desk-like tables at each of which an official sat busily writing. I joined the first queue as, although it had more people, it seemed to be moving faster. Grasping my passport tightly I edged forward until it was my turn. I smiled nicely as the official took the precious document from me. He didn't return my smile, just scrutinised the paper thoroughly, with a rapid, piercing gaze he growled,

"How old are you?" I lied quickly.

"Oh, twenty one sir. See, it's on my passport there."

"I know that," he barked, "But you don't look near that. And where are the people from Oakland that are supposed to be meeting you?"

This was going to be worse than I thought.

"They'll be waiting for me on the wharf when I get off." I trembled a little, flushed and confused.

Thankfully I kept control, but those behind me were becoming impatient, pushing forward. The official obviously couldn't make up his mind. Looking the passport and me over once more, he said,

"You'd better wait aside until I'm through with these people. Then we'll see."

I felt frozen, stammered something and edged away. I knew he was not going to pass me. Seeing the other line dwindling rapidly I threw caution to the wind and moved with it. Fortunately he had returned my passport which I gave to the other man. He returned my smile, glanced at the papers, stamped them and passing them back said he hoped I'd have a lovely holiday. The smile was still frozen to my face but the rest of my body flew from the saloon, to the gangway and stumbled down it blindly. Knowing Johnny had taken care of my baggage gave me time and I regained my confidence, but not before I was off that wharf and away from the *M.S. Maunganui*.

Johnny took me to lunch, my first in an American drugstore. Chemists in New Zealand didn't serve counter lunches or ice-creams. It was warm so we had waffles and ice-cream which

tasted lovely. Johnny was vastly relieved when I had stopped trembling and recounted my adventures getting off the ship. He said he hoped my luck would hold well enough for a happy and prosperous life in Hollywood. He took me to a modest, but respectable hotel where I registered for one night. He'd booked me a sleeper on the once famous "owl train" to Los Angeles to leave the following night. He turned to me with a grin,

"Now, what would a future movie star like to do and see?"

I had no idea so he left me at the hotel, saying he would call for me at about four p.m. and show me the sights. I was thrilled and grateful. The room was small but clean and comfortable. I had a short rest but was far too excited to lie about. Also I could still feel the gait of the ship while I was lying down and there was a rolling feeling when I walked. I was anxious for the time to pass quickly as I wanted to find out quickly what Johnny could discover about my "fast split" from the ship - hardly a graceful departure, but necessary.

Restless and beginning to wish I was back with Glory, I decided on a walk about San Francisco's main streets. Even my little ramble that day showed me what a lovely and colourful city it was. I loved it then and do now. So many things were utterly foreign to me on that first visit. I watched fascinated as a tall skinny guy before a hot plate facing the window into the street ladled pancake mix, then turned the pancakes by tossing them high into the air with the aid of a flat turner. I watched for easily five minutes and never once did he falter or miss. I think he must have thought I was hungry, stray waif, dressed in mother's clothes and on the loose. He smiled enticingly at me, displaying several large gold teeth in the process. These also fascinated me as I hadn't seen anything like them before but the spell was broken when he placed the bowl of mix on a counter and seemed to be making for the door. I split for real this time, not stopping until I was round the corner.

True to his promise, Johnny called for me at four. A taxi waited downstairs for a very excited new passenger and away we

went – Telegraph Hill, Nob Hill, Chinatown for a delicious and exotic dinner before a fairyland ride out to Seal Rock where we sat awhile looking over the beautiful harbour towards Oakland where my fictitious relative was supposed to live. But that didn't matter; this was romance and I was floating inches off the ground. Johnny said goodbye at the hotel entrance. He had kissed me several times quite in the grown-up manner, but would not come up to my room, saying,

“Safer to aroha here.”

I shed a few tears and thanked him sincerely for all his care and protection. What dear fellow. I do hope he had a long and happy life. I never saw him again. His ship sailed at two a.m. He had assured me that nothing was said or done about my hasty departure from the ship. So far so good.

Next morning I awoke refreshed after a good sleep, but still rolling a little with the ship. Excitedly I dressed, gathered my baggage and called a cab to take my gear to the “railway depot”. It sounded strange to call it a depot. In New Zealand they were called railway stations. I checked my things through, then made for the drugstore to which Johnny had introduced me, for a hearty brunch. I found I was very hungry. After very efficiently staving off the hunger pangs, I realised I had plenty of hours to fill, so I made for – where else – the movies. I spotted a marquee with a large sign, “Pola Negri in *Bella Donna*” and thought, “That’s for me.” I freely admit I emoted all through it with her. The organist, playing *Leibestraum, Dream of Love*, was obviously also emoting. Lovely it all seemed. Years later I was to be a lot meaner to Miss Negri than looking up at her on a silver screen, but right then it was just a dream.

In the “Owl” pullman car I dropped into sleep with the engine bell clanging in my ears as we crossed the highways. The great adventure had begun. I would wake up in the fairyland of the world. Fairyland? Well, yes, I guess you could call Hollywood by that name, in more ways than one.

HOLLYWOOD, U.S.A.

CHAPTER TEN

As I walked out of the Argyle Arms apartment building, the California sunshine hit me all over like a “dumper” on the beach in New Zealand. It blinded and smothered me, but somehow also made me feel good. As pleasant as the sun was, I was beginning to become worried. I’d be here nearly three months and although I had done quite a bit of entertaining, mostly playing my musical instruments, singing and dancing, it was nearly all for charity shows, so there was no money coming in.

On arrival I had checked into a downtown Los Angeles hotel, the Arcadia, and the next day took a taxi out to Hollywood to move into the Argyle Arms which had been recommended by the hotel desk clerk. All but the rent of the place appealed to me. Situated just off Vine Street and Hollywood Boulevard, it was a quiet, modest looking building, and I know now, a little exclusive. The price should have been an indication, but I met several nice people in the first few days and my spirits rose as they assured me that a “pretty little thing with my talents” would be snapped up almost immediately and also, they would see to it”. I listened, naturally. I turned left at the Boulevard and sauntered toward Gower Street and Western Avenue, going nowhere in particular. A seat in the shade of a large tree attracted me, so I sat to think over my predicament.

Already I felt as though I had been there a long time. People had a saying that Hollywood was not a place but a state of mind. I accepted that a long time ago. The first neighbour to greet me soon after I arrived turned out to be the mother of a very well-known leading lady, Helene Chadwick, now long forgotten, but she played opposite Richard Dix often. I didn’t meet her, but saw her several times, visiting her mother. Mrs Chadwick introduced me to several other tenants, Diane and Larry Hughes, who were to weave in and out of my life for several years. Larry was an Australian, so we had the Southern

Hemisphere in common. Larry and Diane also weaved in and out of the motion picture business. There was also a wonderful piano player and her ex-leading man husband. There seemed to be endless parties, day and night, with a great deal of bootleg liquor, mostly gin. At every party I met at least one or two people I liked. All seemed to belong to the picture business in one form or another, so the conversation, interminably, was the picture business and connected people. It rapidly became for me the only place on earth and remained so for the next twenty years.

I delighted in watching the gleaming automobiles pass, tops down and the sun shining all over. The Pacific Electric street-cars clanged loudly on their way to pass over Western Avenue and on to downtown Los Angeles. It was dusty and hot, but the palms and pepper-trees gave plenty of welcome shade. My mind wandered back to the last several weeks.

The first few days I was content to stroll up and down the Boulevard. It didn't take long then - a few nice shops, Woolworths, of course, always referred to as the dime store, Robinsons, considered the department store, the useful and exclusive Baggins. Hollywood was still a village then and remained so for the next few years. I couldn't walk along the Boulevard without being greeted from the sidewalk or a passing car with a, "Hi, Tui! How goes it?" It was a town of gaiety and buddyship - full of smiles. A little further down the Boulevard on the left was the forecourt of Sid Grauman's Egyptian Theatre, the most important there at that time. The Chinese was to come a few years later a block up, but opposite. It was far more lavish, to the point of bad taste, but still interesting to many people, even fifty years later. Henri's, the intimate café up near Highland Avenue, was a mecca to after-theatre people. It was rumoured that Charlie Chaplin had an interest in Henri's, but true or not, it had delightful food. The El Capitan theatre was just being built. It was to give me much pleasure a couple of years later. The legend had already begun concerning Hollywood Boulevard and

Vine Street and standing there a short time one was certain to meet at least one person one knew.

The Hughes had put me into the picture about the mileage concerned doing the rounds of the studios and their casting offices, seeking work. Those really were the “good old days” of the “casting couch” and it was no joke. I used my size and speed to good effect on many occasions dodging office furniture to escape the octopus-like arms of a large puffing male or equally large and determined butch female. My tiny stature, just five feet, blonde hair and white skin seemed to be just what the doctor ordered for their purposes. Rather a shame when Central Casting did away with all that; it was also really colourful.¹⁰ The Hughes had told me the round trip to all studios would cover a good fifty miles. The all-time friend of hopeful actors and performers was the telephone; that, at least, has not changed.

While still sitting in the shade I noticed a lot of feverish activity in and around a wooden, two-storey building across the street. Being a friendly type loving to talk to people and also curious I turned to a man sitting nearby and asked what was going on. He took the opportunity to push against me rather intimately, but satisfied my curiosity, informing me it was to be “another goddam radio station, K.N.X., The Voice of Hollywood.” (Coincidentally a few weeks later I was invited to perform on the air on K.N.X.’s opening day, singing and playing the steel guitar. I was proud and thrilled. Strangely I can’t remember the names of any of the other performers except a very beautiful dark young woman, who had also just landed in Hollywood, but she was from Mexico City - Dolores del Rio, That, my first broadcast was the forerunner of a vast number throughout my life, even to my own show for KFWB, Warner Brothers radio station.) I fell back into my reverie after a few short sharp comments repulsed the advances of my smart-assed informant, to be rudely awakened by a cheeky and very scruffy black scottie dog lifting his leg preparing to pee on my silk stocking clad leg. He got short shrift and quite a few quiet swear-

words flung at him as I was beginning to wonder already if it was true as I'd been told that Hollywood people and their animals were interested in sex first, then pictures.

My ideas on the subject were aided somewhat by the events of the previous night. My neighbour, the piano player had asked me in to tea, or as I was learning to call it, supper. I accepted thankfully as I was not, nor am I yet, domesticated. After some beautiful piano music, a couple of slugs of bath-tub gin and then quite a few more slugs, I slurringly said I'd better head for my own couch - I glanced at her husband who was already passed out on their couch. It sure was powerful medicine. But this morning I awoke, slightly muzzy and greatly amazed to find I was in bed with the piano player. I was dressed except for shoes, stockings and panties. She was dressed in only a slip. Her husband was becoming conscious; not willingly, however. He groaned, held his head and tried, unsuccessfully to rise. His wife smiled sweetly at him and said,

“Good morning, dear. What do you think? Guess? I'll have to marry Tui now; we slept together last night.” and laughed in her provocative, tinkling way.

I blushed furiously and said I was sorry to put them to any bother and must get to my own place at once. She was amused, vastly. He was not, sourly. I bolted out clutching my shoes and other things, thankful that no one saw me. Thinking on it now I still blush and think it was a very strange way to behave.

The shadows were lengthening and I felt depressed, so instead of going over to FBO studios, as I had intended, I returned to my apartment at the Argyle Arms. “Poverty row” could wait a little longer for my august presence.

Still in a pensive mood I prepared a meagre meal. Ignoring a few taps on the door I sat, ate and thought some more. I was becoming quite worried about my dwindling funds. I must be paid for future work or I'd be in real trouble. I'd soon realised that although the small coterie of friends I'd made were nice, full of fun and free with booze, most had already had any show

business work they were likely to get and were interested in not much more than booze, sex and bugger tomorrow. I realised also I must quit the Argyle Arms. It was too expensive for me alone and I knew no one to share.

One letter of introduction had helped me get an interview with Jesse Lasky Snr. who received me pleasantly saying “at the moment things are slow, but the Famous Players Lasky had joined with Paramount” and “he would keep me in mind.” He also invited me to a fancy dress welcome home party for “Glorious” Gloria Swanson. I was thrilled, especially when he said I could obtain a costume from his wardrobe department. I didn’t know a soul there, but Mr Lasky made my night when he introduced me to the biggest star I had encountered so far. She wrote in a childish little album I still have, “Gloria Swanson, Marquise La Bailly, de la Palais de la Coudraye. That’s all.” The indefatigable Miss Swanson had just arrived back from France where she met and married her Marquis. She was fascinating then as she is now, so many years later. When I met her the Christie comedy outfit was very big, with many productions shooting at the same time. Christie’s, Famous Players and Paramount all seemed to merge at this time.

I have no intention of writing a history of the “silents”, not even of motion pictures in general, except as they affected my life. If that is what you want I can recommend the best book I’ve read on the silents, the real “golden era” of movies, Kevin Brownlow’s *The Parade’s Gone By*. I found most of it authentic. He can be excused for slight over or understatement on the “feeling” of our times. But thank God for a young man (born only two years before I left Hollywood) who had the emotion and interest to save an accurate account of the “golden silents” for the millions of people now interested.¹¹ It is difficult unless one kept constant diaries, which I did not, to be completely accurate about dates, but I’ll not be more than a couple of weeks out.



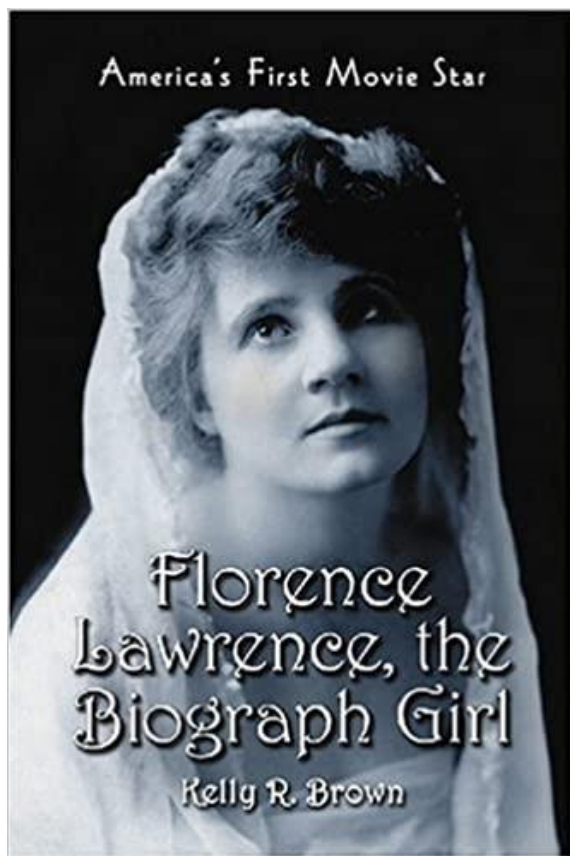
Jesse Lasky sr



Gloria Swanson

The next time there was a tap at the door I answered it gladly; it was Florence Lawrence, who was a serious woman, especially about pictures. I had met her at the piano-player's parties. She did not drink, but loved music as we all did and the piano-player was very good. She had promised to help me in my career as much as she could and I knew she had no ulterior motive. Florence came to tell me she was going to FBO studios tomorrow and would I like to accompany her. Would I! I looked at her dear, scared, face and my eyes brimmed. She was all but thirty eight or nine and her career was almost finished. A few lines, just beginning to show on her face were magnified by that all-seeing sadistic eye, the camera lens. Lines and blemishes were definitely not allowed in those days of the sweet, feminine, pale little clinging viny heroines dominating the leading roles. Florence had been an important actress from 1909 until about 1920 - the original Biograph Girl. Another Florence (Turner) known as the Vitograph Girl was the nearest competitor, but not

nearly as popular as the Biograph Girl. A little later Mary Pickford was known, briefly, as the Biograph Girl. This may sound confusing, but then so was the movie business and its people. Devious? They invented it and used every facet of it - probably still do if all the facts were published. This applies mostly to the "heads" as the workers back then had little time for deviousness. Most had their asses worked off and most ended up broke as I did for various reasons.



Florence confided in me that scarcity of parts had caught up with her because of her age. Frantically she had sought a way out. Plastic surgery was suggested, a rare and dangerous practice in the twenties, but the operation was a complete failure. She retired soon after this period, but I still have a telephone number and address written on a small piece of paper in her own handwriting. On the other side of the paper is, would you believe, a beer recipe, not in her writing. She was a lovely lady, kind and unaffected. I am proud that she was my friend even for a short time.

The next day we walked the short distance to the FBO Studios, which were on Gower Street, not far from the Boulevard. I perhaps should explain here that FBO stood for Film Booking Offices. They rented space and equipment to independent film companies and productions. A large, rambling, place it later became RKO Studios when taken over by Radio Keith Orpheum and still goes under the name RKO. Keith Orpheum was the largest and greatest vaudeville circuit of the day and every great artist did a tour with it at some time in their career.

On the way to the studios Florence explained she had heard of a part that would suit her and she knew the producer so she believed she would have a chance. She also explained that many stars, feature players and directors were moving in and out of FBO constantly so it was a good place to visit when you wanted work - there were so many avenues to explore. As we entered the huge complex I almost immediately sighted and recognised a small figure walking towards us. I stopped, hypnotised. Florence calmly advanced to greet the lady.

“Good morning madam.”

Madam answered, but with a thick Russian accent. Florence introduced us.

Madam Nazimova, may I...?” I didn’t hear the rest; Madam Nazimova took my hand warmly and held it. I sputtered in a

completely inane fashion and just stared helplessly at one of my favorite stars, well remembered from Glory's piano playing days.

"Ah Florence," she murmured, "your little sister, yes?"

"No, not my little sister Madam, a youngster from across the Pacific. I intend to try to get her some work in pictures."

Madam had brightened perceptibly when Florence refuted our relationship. I had withdrawn my hand, which Florence promptly grasped, saying we must be on our way. Madam smiled beautifully at me saying, anything, just anything, she could do would be a pleasure and for me to be sure to call on her. I found my speech at last when I realised I was being hustled off, and said I'd be delighted and would call soon. Although I was stunned by this unexpected, but thrilling meeting, I couldn't help noticing an unusual brusqueness in Florence's manner. I thanked her for the introduction, but Florence turned to me with a serious face, saying,



Alla Nazimova

“Madam is a very great actress, Tui. I have known her for years and like her enormously, but I really do think it best if you don’t see her alone. I’ll take you to see her another day, alright?”

I said I guess so, but I didn’t understand. Did Madam perhaps drink too much? Nearly everyone else did, or so it seemed to me. “Goodness no, child. It’s just that, er – I, oh well, perhaps we can talk about that later.”

But we never did and unfortunately I never again met the wonderful Alla Nazimova, although for a short time when it first opened I stayed at her Garden of Allah. It wasn’t until much later that I was to understand what was worrying Florence and the knowledge didn’t come from her – a “gay” lady, so what’s new?

That day we also met Monty Banks and William Baines. Monty gave me a long interview and as he was short and plump and I was shorter and slim he said I’d be fine in the female lead in his next comedy. He was all set to begin except for the money which had been promised from New York. He gave me his phone number and told me to call in a few days. However we never did work together. The picture fell through because the promised money never came. It was a precarious business. Monty left Hollywood not too long after that and went to England where he married Gracie Fields, certainly one of England’s most popular entertainers. Their marriage appeared to be happy and lasted until Monty died in 1950.

Billy Baines I did work with a few years later. I don’t recall the name of the picture, what it was about or even for whom. This happened often with “quickies” and outside of rushes, or dailies I think they are now called, I seldom saw anything I was in – even the better ones. It was extremely seldom that the working titles were the same as the titles under which pictures were released. Billy Baines was a very good comedian and almost as amusing off the screen. He kept us in paroxysms of laughter with his anecdotes, particularly those about Samuel Goldfish, who had taken the “wyn” from Selwyn, added it to the

Gold in his surname, making Goldwyn and a lot of money with it. After breaking with L.B. Mayer and company, Goldwyn remained the biggest and best independent of them all. The stories of his very sketchy understanding of the English language are legion and true or false, they are very funny.

It was said that Goldwyn was having a meeting with this writers soon after the release of the controversial book, *Well of Loneliness*. It was banned in some states, but the movie people were reading it avidly, discussing, lauding or rejecting it, according to their particular taste. Whatever else, it was almost unanimously agreed that it was well written. At the meeting a few of the writers fell into discussion of its merits, when Goldwyn demanded to know, if it was so damn good and popular, why he hadn't been informed about it so he could buy it.

"Why Mr Goldwyn," one writer said, "we couldn't make a movie of that story. It's about a lesbian."

"Lesbian, shmesbian," Goldwyn shouted, "we'll make it an American."

But despite his language problems, Goldwyn was a very astute picture maker. Billy Baines was also a very astute businessman. He left pictures and went into the antique business, becoming very successful and wealthy.

In the early twenties in an area covering a few blocks on Sunset Boulevard, Gower Street, Melrose Avenue, Hollywood Boulevard and Western Avenue, there had arisen a patchwork of offices and rooms, known always as "poverty row". It is probably long gone now, but I did quite a lot of work on silents on "poverty row" and was happy to get it. Upon arrival and settling in to the Argyle arms, with the first flush of excitement and ambition still upon me, I rushed energetically around this area looking for work. During one of my visits I came across a kindly gentleman who told me that for one hundred and fifty dollars he would make a film "test" of me that would enable me to procure all the work I could manage. I was naïvely thrilled. At last I'd be on film. I told him I didn't have the money on me but

I'd rush off to the bank of California where I'd deposited my meagre funds.

"I'll go with you," he said. I had no car and thought, how sweet of him, asking him to drop me at the Argyle Arms to pick up my Bank Book. He did, saying, "We'll make the test tomorrow." As fate would have it when I dashed into the apartment building I bumped into Florence Lawrence.

"What's the rush and excitement?" she asked with quite a lot of kindly amusement. Breathlessly I told her. She just gaped at me, mouth ajar.

"My God, you are a hayseed, aren't you?"

"I don't understand," I stuttered.

"You sure don't," she muttered and, grasping my arm, "let me meet this kindly gentleman."

She propelled me ahead of her out into the balmy California sunshine. Bewildered, I wanted to go back to collect my bank passbook.

"No, just wait until I talk to this Johnny."

The said Johnny was waiting like a cat for a mouse, until he spotted Florence, dragging his victim towards his nice shiny auto. Suddenly with a roar of all eight cylinders and the screeching of balloon tires he was gone. He must have thought I'd got Mama to deal with him and wisely fled.

Florence gave me a well-remembered lecture about the con-men working this little stunt, mostly around "poverty row". They hired a room and old camera, even pretending to make a test, but there was never any film in the camera and when the poor sucker returned for the finished test they would find an empty office. Shaken from my close brush with disaster I fell all over Florence, thanking her. She brusquely said it was nothing, but to watch it before contemplating parting with any money again. I did, but not always successfully.

Many weeks later I knew I really must move to cheaper quarters and I also must make some money. Unfortunately I didn't choose well here as I allowed a married couple, who were

also having money troubles, talk me into paying two weeks rent on a small modern bungalow in Laurel Canyon. They were to pay the next two weeks rent, but they didn't. Of course I didn't know this until the second fortnight's rent came due. They were my friends, the Hughes, who worked in pictures when work was available. They knew many people in the business, actors, directors, writers, ex-leading men, future leading man and a few stars. I met a great many movie people through them and learned quite a bit about the business, so I was and still am grateful to them.

The Hughes were young and gay and partying was a necessary way of life for them, but this made the existence precarious. They threw some great parties in the first two weeks – the bootleg gin and orange flowed freely. We were hosts to lots of nice people but I'll only mention two here. One was completely unimportant but he and his name intrigued me. The night he was at the continuous party was a "lulu". Our house and yard lights illuminated the then sparsely inhabited Canyon for quite a distance; the music, dancing and general party noises penetrated even further into the canyon and Mr George Pancake was almost the centre of all this gaiety. Mr George Pancake was the unlikely name he gave when he crashed the party – tall and ugly, with a wide grin showing to advantage a mouth full of gold teeth. We all thought one of the others had brought him. Suddenly the vice-squad, called, no doubt, by neighbours who had been long-suffering to this point, were there. They asked us quite nicely to "knock it off", had a slug of gin and left, but not without collecting Mr Pancake, who they informed us was a gangster.

Somewhat chastened we lowered the noise, but the party continued. Later that night a very pretty redhead called in with a few friends and that was my first meeting with Clara Bow. Newly out from Brooklyn, New York, she had rented Bessie Love's lovely log cabin a couple of miles further along the canyon. She was unknown as yet, but word was out that she was very good on the strength of her first film, *Down to the Sea in Ships*, which

had been made in the east and great plans were underway for her. She was very natural, charming and fun as well as pretty. The party had thinned out a little by this and we had a few drinks. We liked each other at once and before she and her friends left she gave me her number, extracting a promise from me to call on her soon.



Clara Bow

A few days later I left the “party” to look for a room and work. I had received several letters from home – Glory needed money. The letters arrived in bunches by ship from New Zealand and we know how long that took. I found quarters, a large room, suitably situated on Hollywood Boulevard and it at least matched my slim finances. I said my goodbyes to the canyon, the party and to the Hughes. I was to see little of them or the people at the Argyle Arms again which was a pity – they’d mostly been protective of me, except, perhaps financially and we’d been great buddies; all for one etc.

The rooming house proved to be clean, quiet, respectable and cheap compared to my previous living arrangements. Sparsely furnished, it was easy for me to keep clean. I soon met a young man who lived in a small separate flat in the back yard. He was a stunt-man in films, mostly using his motorcycle and side-car, at Universal, such stunts as *Getting Gertie’s Garter* and Mack Sennett chases. He did his own cooking and in his spare time worked at his lovely small sculptures. He invited me in to see them, sculptures that is, not etchings and no hanky-panky. Looking back I think Lew Penn was one of the straightest, both physically and mentally, and the nicest looking young men I’ve ever met. He was in his early twenties. He invited me in for coffee and cookies and I told him of my problems getting started and of the difficulties in presenting a letter of introduction a New Zealand theatre-owner had given me to Universal Pictures. The Universal studio was a good distance away over the Cahuenga Pass into North Hollywood and Universal City – several miles over a narrow, dusty and hilly road which was also pretty dangerous with big trucks rushing back and forth getting out to San Fernando Valley en route to San Francisco. Lew gave me some of these details, but finished, “I’ll take you there in my side-car if you like.” I accepted the offer gratefully and accompanied him early next morning.

I doubt that the Hollywood Bowl was there in the middle of 1924, but the “makings” were in the lovely gentle slopes we rode

past that day, a journey I was to repeat daily for some months. Lew escorted me to the casting office, then went on about his work.



Samuel Goldwyn



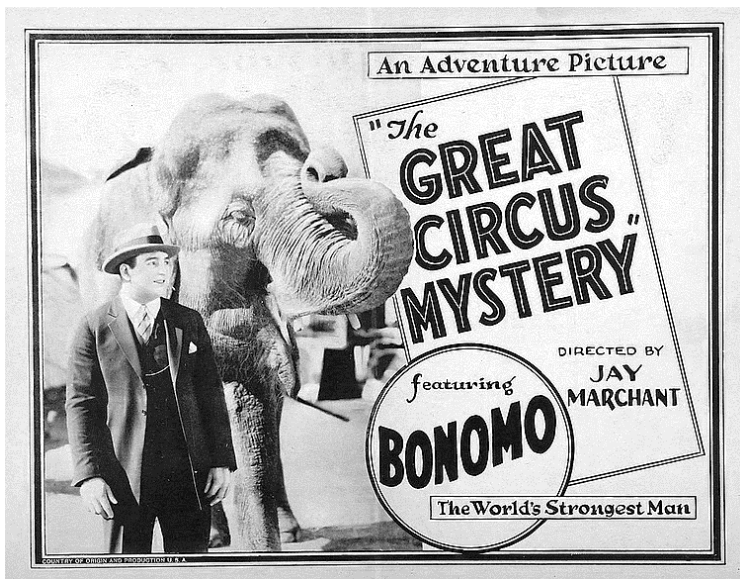
Carl Laemmle

While waiting for my turn I eagerly drank in the atmosphere of the place and with it came the feeling of excitement I was to know for several years. They were wonderful, hard-working times, when Hollywood was small enough for the very streets, particularly around “poverty row” to be always pervaded with the smell of film. It was, no doubt, the developing emulsions, but to me it was very exciting odour. I very occasionally encounter it today, but when I do all the old love of that early industry makes me misty.

Universal was the hub of the industry and had been the major studio on West Coast for some years. Holding the reins in a tight fist was “Uncle Carl” and everyone knew he was the boss, very pro-German and kind to his relatives over the Atlantic. He brought them to USA and Universal Studios in droves. It was a “universal” joke around Hollywood for years - Uncle Carl Laemmle and his endless stream of relatives. He was pleasant to

us and I thought highly of the little personal knowledge of him that I have, but he had a reputation for being an extremely tough competitor, which is no doubt what made Universal Pictures so successful.

My circus training stood me in good stead at this time and I managed to get a job straight away. I had arrived at just the right time, with my experience in contortion, high-wire walking and general circus skills. They were just starting a twelve-episode two-reeler serial called *The Great Circus Mystery*.¹² The assistant casting director, Mr Harold Dodds was a handsome and fine gentleman, very unlike his immediate boss whom I was to loathe later. But my interview with Mr Dodds went very well and he said I would undoubtedly do well. Universal gave me a “stock contract” at fifty dollars a week, good enough money in those days for an untried unknown. Having in mind Glory’s pleas for money and my own dwindling purse I was more than glad to accept.





An Adventure
Picture

the **GREAT
CIRCUS
MYSTERY**

DIRECTED BY
JAY MARCHANT

FEATURING

BONOMO

The World's Strongest Man

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND PRODUCTION U.S.A.

The studio had hired a fairly small circus, both animals and personnel, which was now erected on the back lot in preparation for the show. They had also hired several people like me who had circus experience and experience in training animals. Universal also had its own zoo which included a large Indian elephant called Minnie, who was the subject of a typical paragraph in our own magazine, *The Universal Weekly*: “Minnie, one of the most famous elephants in the United States and who, for the past several years, has been the mascot of a Masonic organisation in Kansas City, was purchased by Universal to play in *The Great Circus Mystery*. Minnie replaces Charlie (no, you nut, not Chaplin), the famous picture elephant condemned to death last year because of homicidal insanity.” End of quote, but more of poor Minnie later.

Lew had solved my transportation problems with his motorcycle and side-car, so things were looking up. The first time I entered the great studio portals I came across a small “street scene” with Madge Bellamy emoting soulfully, backed by equally soulful organ, violin and cello, in front of a pretty little flower stall. On my way to be fitted with tights and other circus apparel I passed rows of dressing-rooms and thrilled at the thought that soon I would be using one. We did our own make-up; I was simply told what number make-up stick to buy and that was that, but it was no problem - I’d been making up professionally since I was a child.

The list of big-name people I met in the next few months at the studio was impressive. Some became dear friends for many years; others I met, generally liked, but passed quickly. Lon Chaney Senior, the super-star at the time, was my idol. I was not alone in my adulation as he was much loved. Although appearing abrupt, he was genuinely kind and helpful to the young and ambitious. He showed me how to apply the make-up properly and I followed him around like a slave, but of course, he pretended not to notice. He would buy me a soda at the commissary, now called a canteen, and I’d help him choose little

gifts to take home to his wife. His untimely death in 1930 saddened me deeply. He was a great artist and a lovable man.

It wasn't long before I had the run of the studio and I loved it. We were still making *The Great Circus Mystery* as 1924 was drawing to a close. I was busy and happy, but wished Glory could see me now. Odd free moments were spent whirling around Hollywood in Lew's side-car, learning the district and the location of all the studios. Lew had told me he loved me and in a puppy-love manner I returned it. We'd sit on the beach, he'd kiss me gently on the lips and hold me close as the moon slid westward to the hissing sound of the waves. Sometimes while riding around he'd lift the side-car off the road and we'd dash along in this manner for streets when the traffic was light. It was quite a thrill and we'd laugh and giggle like the kids we were. We were young, having fun and we belonged to one of the world's select groups. The "world" didn't exist anyway outside of Hollywood, except perhaps in our many quiet rooms at night when we thought of our homes and family. I met most of the players, from stars down, at Universal in 1924. Some, under long contract to the studio, I knew well and was invited to their homes frequently. Many free-lanced, but Hollywood was small and it was easy to get in touch with friends.

The top female stars then were Laura La Plante, Virginia Valli, Madge Bellamy (whom I've already mentioned), Louise Lorraine and rapidly rising to super-star status, Mary Philbin - a pretty girl with beautiful long dark curls. She will be remembered best for two leading roles: opposite Lon Chaney in *Phantom of the Opera* and *Merry Go Round*, with Norman Kerry and Erich Von Stroheim, both of whom I liked enormously. Erich was magnificent and certainly one of the most brilliant picture-makers of all time. Mary and I became friendly - I think she felt sorry for the waif so far from home and family and she invited me to her home in Fairfax Avenue for Sunday dinner with her and her parents. Mary was an only child from Chicago, where her father had been a train driver.



Lon Chaney jr



Laura La Plante



Virginia Valli



Madge Bellamy



Louise Lorraine



Mary Philbin

They took me warmly to their hearts and into their family. For many months I regularly enjoyed Mrs Philbin's dinners and afterwards a game of croquet on the front lawn. I remember them with affection and gratitude. That lifestyle was far from the image of wicked Hollywood, but then, it always depended on whom one met.

Although this was a happy time of hard work and equally hard play and I revelled in the excitement of meeting all the great actors and actresses of the time, every now and then a little tragedy would dim the rainbow. At the rooming house late one Saturday afternoon I was resting and reading in my room, when I heard a commotion in the hall. Opening my door I saw that the door directly opposite was ajar and the room's sole occupant, a girl, was staggering towards the stairs, eyes staring horribly and mouth foaming. As I ran towards her she fell into my arms, bringing both of us to the floor. (I was barely five feet tall, the bane of my existence, and she was much larger as well as a few years older.) By now she was making dreadful gurgling noises and I could smell Lysol, so I quickly guessed what had

happened. I screamed for the landlady who was already coming from downstairs. We quickly sent for an ambulance, but heard later that she had died. I didn't know her - we'd never spoken and if I ever knew her name I've forgotten it - but I cried myself to sleep that night, horror struck and a little frightened. I heard of many similar cases throughout the years, both men and women taking their lives because of failure.

We read of one such case in which the central figure was John Bowers, who had been a successful leading man before I arrived in Hollywood. He had been tested along with dozens of other stars and leading men, for the lead role in the 1926-released *Ben Hur*. Ramon Navarro finally got the part. I never met John Bowers, but I did meet his wife, Marguerite De La Motte, who also was a successful actress in the pre and early twenties. The story we read was that one day down at Santa Monica, John Bowers took a small boat, rowed himself out to sea, slipped into the Pacific Ocean and was never seen again. The row boat was found, but his body wasn't. It is generally believed that the death of John Bowers was the basis for the story *A Star is Born*, originally played by Janet Gaynor and the splendid Frederic March, whom I did have the pleasure of knowing when he worked with Clara Bow. Most people will be aware that *A Star is Born* was made into a musical starring the great Judy Garland. Most, including myself, consider it the pinnacle of her adult career. I was saying that many died for lack of success, but of course many also died because of it.

The early days produced plenty of scandals, including several murders still unsolved or satisfactorily explained. The shooting of big-time producer, Thomas R. Ince, aboard a yacht owned by the newspaper tycoon, William Randolph Hearst, was never properly explained. Hearst had loaned the yacht to some movie people, a not unusual occurrence. It was allowed that a number of the movie people, including Charlie Chaplin, were entertained there. The murder of director, Desmond Taylor, and Thelma Todd's mysterious death also were never explained.

There were many theories and rumours, but no proof. After Wally Reid's death from drugs and the tragic end of Fatty Arbuckle with Virginia Rappe in San Francisco, the heads of the film industry became worried. People reacted violently and threatened to boycott motion pictures in general unless there was a complete shake-up. Public opinion being all-important to the industry, a shake-up there was. The Hayes' Organisation was formed to closely "screen" movies and in particular, their people. Movies may have become more "wholesome" but I'm pretty sure morals stayed as they were, had always been and still are.

Lew Penn was still my "beau" after a fashion. On Saturday nights down at the beach we'd build fires and have a weenie roast or, at the right time of year we'd arrive in time for the Grunion run. The Grunion is a tiny fish which finds its way onto the beach to spawn. At night we used torches or the auto headlights to illuminate the beach. It was very exciting grabbing the slippery little fellows and filling buckets. Many people don't believe in the Grunion run, but I've seen them. I'd be willing to bet, though, that they are not there any more.

Besides spending a lot of time at FBO, meeting plenty of people, I also made my way over to MGM at Culver city. Those were the days of marvellous character actors and I knew many well. Russell Simpson, that dear man who loved to recite *The Bells* at any occasion; Stuart Paton, the splendid H.B. Warner, my beloved Tyrone Power senior and his lady Sheila. Tyrone was an extremely powerful Shakespearean actor and held me enthralled while he declaimed robustly. At that time he was working in silents, although he claimed he hated movies. He said he needed the money and if so it is no wonder. While I was still battling to get a start in and out of two-reeler serials, westerns and comedy leads I was pretty short of money and one such time arrived home to find a cheque for fifty dollars in an envelope had been slipped under my door. Thank you again Ty, up there in Shakespeare's heaven. Sadly, Ty didn't live to see his

namesake son carry on the Power tradition to dizzy heights before being snatched away in the middle of a scene.



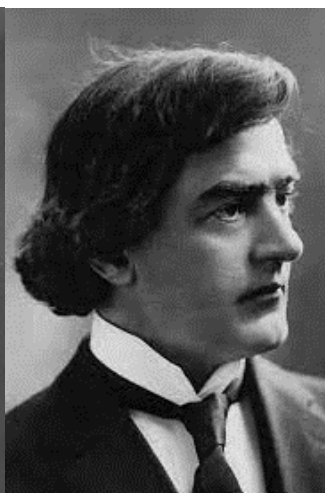
Russell Simpson



Stuart Paton



HB Warner



Tyrone Power sr.

My first Christmas and New Year had come and gone quietly, although I was still working on *The Great Circus Mystery*, I was

alone on the holidays. Lew took me for a ride around Hollywood on New Year's Eve, and I saw a little of the action, but we were not "of it". Naturally I was lonely and longed to see Glory. She had sent a little Christmas parcel which gladdened my heart. I had sent some money, it was all I could do. During the festive season on my way to wardrobe, past several dressing room doors, I was astonished to see my friend, Norman Kerry, performing what to me was a very peculiar feat. I stopped and he called for me to enter. Curious, I asked what he was up to.

"Watch," he said. He had a bath towel draped around his neck and, clutching one end of the towel and a glass in his left hand, he slowly pulled the other end of the towel with his right hand until the glass reached his lips. He gulped the liquor without taking a breath. I soon saw the reason for this fascinating little by-play. He was shaking like an aspirin leaf. Laughing, as usual, he said,

"Too much Christmas cheer. Beware of John Barleycorn, Tui."

I couldn't help laughing with him, he was such a jolly fellow, but I assured him I would - not that I did, later.

On our circus tent set we had a few real-life as well as "reel-life" dramas. Our director, Jay Marchant had set up for a scene which necessitated the use of wind machines. The tent was supposed to be on fire, so smoke pots were set going, the wind-machines on and the scene began. Minnie the elephant (remember her?) was outside the tent near the action. They got action all right! Minnie was very docile and friendly, so was not chained, but the smoke panicked her. She was not used to smoke and couldn't see. To her smoke meant fire which terrifies all animals. Poor Minnie charged through the side walls, scattering seats and people, one of them me, into the ring and knocking down two men in her fear. Even so, she tried to avoid hurting anyone, lifting her foot so not to step squarely on one man, but her toes scraped his chest, crushing it badly. The other man was more fortunate, although his neck was badly enough

injured for him to have to wear a Collins collar for two years, but he recovered. Standing by the crushed fellow I saw that he was conscious, but obviously in great pain. He was just able to whisper,

“I’m done for.”

And he was, for he died soon after. Naturally we were a subdued lot for days. The elephant was not vicious and not to blame, I’m glad they didn’t destroy her as had been done to “poor Charlie, because of homicidal insanity” ?

The serial was nearing its end now and I began asking around for other work. The comedy producer, Joe Rock, who had Stan Laurel working with him on several comedies, said he had a job for me. Ten days later we were on a yacht doing scenes around Catalina Island.¹³



Stan Laurel

Stan was a dear man, we all loved him. Joe's brother, Murray Rock was in charge and I sure liked him. He was warm, friendly and sincere. We had a lot of carefree fun on those locations and quite a bit of comedy which wasn't in the script. On one trip, the yacht broke down with rudder trouble. It was a small boat with no radio aboard, so, wallowing in deep seas, most of the cast and crew seasick, we weakly called to the occasional passing fishing boat for help. Finally we were towed to shore, but by this time, although I wasn't seasick myself, the smell and continual rolling about had turned me to a pale shade of green, compared to my companions' deep green colour. Julie Leonard was one on that trip who was not at all well. Julie was Jackie Cooper's aunt. It was just a few years later that Jackie was to become famous as "Skippy" and continue to further success as an adult actor.

Naturally, parties were one of our favourite forms of relaxation. Some film people invited me to one at the old, but fascinating Alexandria hotel facing Pershing Square in downtown L.A. The party was being given by the author Peter B. Kyne, who always stayed at the Alexandria when down from San Francisco where he lived. I loved his books, so was delighted to have a chance to meet him. Pete was a good friend for many years. I took him some small writings one time and he said, "Tui, give up acting and write." As simply as that, but it wasn't so simple. I had dependents in New Zealand and constantly needed money for them and for my own support, but I've often wished I had taken Pete's advice. Of equal interest to me that afternoon was my meeting with John Ringling, the elder, of Ringling Bros Barnum and Bailey's Circus. After a grand dinner we all went to John's wonderful six-ring circus. We sat in his private box, a privilege I was to enjoy for some years, but that first occasion transcended all others, for never again did the circus seem so glitteringly wonderful. Besides the six rings, unheard of today, the show featured the greatest performers of all time, including Lillian Leitzel, May Worth and Con Colleano (the last two were Australian-born). John Ringling introduced us

to the stars – great fun. Sadly the magnificent Leitzel fell to her death in Copenhagen shortly afterwards, the result of a faulty rope. Whatever the cause, it robbed the world of an irreplaceable performer.

The Alexandria Hotel was the favorite place for most great artists from overseas – Sarah Bernhardt, Pavlova and other such stars, it was a shame it was demolished. It had an “air” and even the cute Death Valley Scotty frequented it when in Los Angeles.

I was growing up fast, mentally and physically. I’ve only mentioned the couple of nice guys interested in me until now, but believe me, I had my share of being pursued around a goodly amount of overstuffed furniture, dodging armchairs and particularly sofas, with great dexterity, aided, I’m sure, by my early training in dancing and circus work. Most women will share with me that feeling when at last their luck runs out. The following incident may not seem to be relevant, but I assure you it is.

In those prohibition times everybody had their favourite bootlegger. In numerous little black books you’d find his name at the head of the list. Hollywood was anything but “dry” as movie buffs will know from the movies themselves. Somewhere along the line I’d met and used the product of one such bootlegger whom I’ll call Whitey. Unlike the rest of his ilk, he was quiet in manner, and dress, well spoken, nice looking and kindly. Sometime in 1925 I was going through a period of scarce work, although I managed to pay my rent at the rooming house. Lew gave me an occasional meal and friends often asked me out. Letters of loving encouragement were coming from Glory with little parcels of things not of much use to me, but sent in love. Now the sky fell in. Knowing how I’d loved my trained, but pet, dogs and without consulting me first, Glory decided I should have one of their pups. I was brooding in my room, planning strategies to obtain work, when the landlady knocked at the door, handed me an official-looking envelope and disappeared into the gloom. From the terse contents of the envelope I

gathered there was one small pup waiting to be collected from Wilmington or San Pedro, the ship harbour for L.A., and a bloody long way to go with or without a car. On top of that there was eighteen dollars to pay, I don't remember for what, but I'm sure Glory had paid its passage. Eighteen bucks was a bunch of money for me right then. I felt lonely and sad at not being able to go immediately to collect the puppy. I'd been invited to a party, so decided to go in the hope it would cheer me up. A couple of friends had invited quite a few picture folk. The piano playing lady pounced immediately and took me to meet a very good looking, charming man who was to become one of Hollywood's finest directors and a true good friend to me all my Hollywood life. He was W.S. Van Dyke, known affectionately as "Woody".



Woody van Dyke

The party was a bright one and as it got late the liquor was getting low so Whitey was phoned to bring a jug of gin. He duly arrived with the supplies and was invited to stay awhile.

He had always shown an interest in me, very politely, but noticeably. Sitting beside me he asked me why I looked so blue and why didn't I have a drink and cheer up. Saying I'd had several, I took another and told him my troubles. Smiling, Whitey took my hand and said,

"Cheer up, kiddo, I'll take care of it." I was a bit startled and dizzy from the gin.

"You will?" I asked in surprise.

"Why sure. What's a lousy eighteen bucks between friends." I felt relief combined with slight apprehension, but a few more gins put everything out of my conscious mind.

The next morning I awoke with a throbbing head. I also felt shattered and sore. I lay thinking, trying to penetrate the fog. How did I get home, undressed and into bed? I didn't have a clue: Throwing back the bed covers, I slipped out and froze with horror. The white rose was no longer white, it was dark red. Hastily I repaired the bedding, washed and dressed. I was about to leave when a discreet knock startled me. Thinking it could be the landlady with a few well chosen words, tentatively I opened the door. There stood Whitey wearing a sheepish look and with the most adorable Maltese poodle in his arms. My face showed Whitey what I felt - disgust, anger and fear chasing each other over my features. He followed me into the room, closing the door behind him. Furiously I moved to open it again, then thought, "What's the use, it's too late now;" I sat down. Whitey put the dog in my lap, then sat too. The silence was pregnant; I sure hoped I wasn't. Ill at ease, and well he might be, Whitey squirmed for a few minutes, then blurted out,

"I'm sorry, Tui. I really am. I knew you didn't play around, but I'd no idea you were a virgin. Truly I..." his voice trailed off.

Tears were straining at my eyes, but I refused to let them come. Tarty I said,

“Well now you know and now I’m not.”

He stood up as I put the pup down and rose to open the door.

“Please do forgive me. The worry made the liquor disagree with you. They asked if I’d drive you home. I had no intention of this happening, but you’d dozed – I carried you upstairs to the room without anyone seeing us. I seldom drink, but I’d had a few last night and I’ve always had a yen for you, you know that. In fact, if you will I’d be happy to marry you – what about it?”

He tried to embrace me, but I pushed him aside, not rudely, but with enough force to show my disinterest in that idea. My anger gone, I blamed myself. Too much to drink – how I hated booze, but I still drank it. I told Whitey I held no grudge, but did not wish to marry, nor, if possible, see him again. Getting up to leave, he said,

“If that’s how you want it, Okay, but if you are pregnant or ever need me, you know where to find me. So long, pal, and please forgive me.”

He was gone. Then I lay down and really howled. The dear wee pup whimpered, licked my wet cheek, then howled right along with me.

This incident was to plague me for a long time, for Glory had put the fear of the unholy into me with her description of venereal disease, unwanted pregnancies, in fact, the sin of having sex in general, the night before I left New Zealand. I guess it was the poor darling’s idea of sex education for I doubt she had any herself. I can’t say her endeavours were of much good to me, except to say that sex, as such, was never to be of great importance in my life. I was, still am, a true romantic – in love with love. Such people, and there are myriads of us, are never satisfied and never completely happy, always awaiting the One True Love who never comes. Sometimes, I’ve found, this brings out the latent homosexuality which is in all of us to begin with.

The “breeders” soon find their level, the homosexuals sometimes find theirs, but the loners remain just that - loners and alone.

Shortly after this I called Clara Bow. “I wondered why you hadn’t called,” she exclaimed in a friendly tone.

“I’ve been too busy looking for work,” I explained. “None to successfully either.”

Clara’s typical attitude toward such insignificant trivia was,

“Never mind, Kiddo, get a taxi and come over. Stay for dinner - I’ll whip up a little party tonight.”

Thanking her, I said I’d love to. She was still at Bessie Love’s house in Laurel Canyon, but she said she was buying a house in Beverly Hills soon. She was already passing me, moneywise. I felt depressed - I couldn’t seem to save. How silly can one get? You can’t save by giving away most of what you earn, but like others I know, I guess I’d do it all again - we never learn.

The old taxi bumped its way along the dusty trail to Bessie Love’s log cabin. Clara saw us coming and ran from the porch to greet me. Before I knew what was happening she had paid the driver, taken me by the arm and, talking forty to the dozen, steered me into the living room. Pouring us a drink she flopped down beside me,

“Everybody’s out,” she said. “All the better - we can have a chat and yet properly acquainted. My you’re a long way from home and all alone, huh?”

I nodded. She told me her mother was dead and she lived with her father, or rather, he lived with her and one servant. Although Clara was only slightly older than me, she seemed more so. Perhaps her attitude was a bit more “worldly”. She came from Brooklyn, New York, so I imagine she would have had to grow up a little earlier in sheer self-defence. After a couple of drinks we sat chatting like old mates. She asked me “where the hell New Zealand was - wasn’t it up near the North Pole somewhere?” I laughed and said she and her poles mixed up, “Nearer the South Pole.” We giggled. Obviously we liked each

other and would-be friends. She told me she also got lonely and whenever either of us felt blue we must get in contact and be lonely no more. I couldn't believe she would ever be blue. I'd never met such a bubbling, friendly, natural person anywhere, Hollywood included. Periodically the phone rang. Clara answered and all I could make out was, "Come on up tonight, we're having a party" - words I was to hear over and over again for some years, from the pretty, gay and insouciant Clara.

Later in the afternoon Clara answered the door bell and in strode a well-made handsome young man. He glared at me, turned to Clara and said,

"Where is he? I know he's here. I'll fix him - I'll fight a duel with him!"

Startled, I looked at Clara, who was laughing her head off.

"Don't be silly, Gilbert, there's no one here at all, except Tui and I. Oh - you don't know Tui, she's -"

That's as far as she got. Not only did he not know me, he didn't appear to want to. He sat and glared from me to Clara and back again, saying,

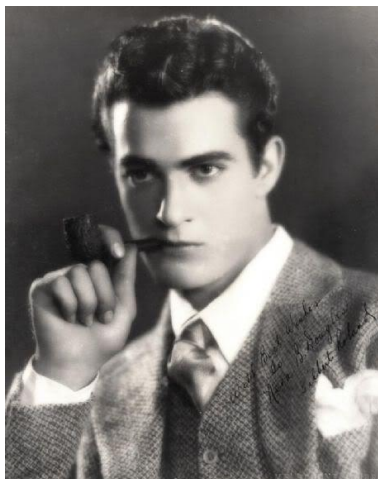
"Clarita (he had a slight accent I noticed) you are not to see or go out with any man but me. If you do, I'll fight a duel with them all. I am good at it; I am good at anything I do."

Feeling in the way I strolled out onto the lovely wide verandah; the view was worth looking at and I wanted the other two to settle their one sided tiff. Clara only seemed to be amused.

The "cheesecake" was Gilbert Roland - he of the Mexican colouring, dark curly hair, swarthy skin and unlikely green eyes - known these days as "Amigo". After a while I went inside. Mr Roland seemed somewhat mollified and they sat on the couch together holding hands. Later Amigo Roland said he had to go, he had an important engagement with the exotic Norma Talmadge about a part in her picture. Brusquely he nodded in my general direction and was gone.

I didn't have to ask Clara what that was all about, she immediately told me. Roland was Spanish (nearly all Mexicans

claimed this, I suppose to exclude the Indian blood mixture so many Mexicans have. I don't go for that idea as I love most things Mexican – dress, dancing, language, music, their delicious food and a few of their people.) Clara thought him terribly romantic, but too possessive and dictatorial. She said he had even spoken of marriage, but with a toss of her red mane and a tinkling laugh, she said she was far from ready for that state yet. Also he could romance Miss Talmadge as he'd threatened and "Screw heem, ha, ha!" Clara didn't take kindly to threats about other would-be beaux. (Yes, a pun intended). Clara did as Clara wished, naturally. Mr Roland did do a part in the Talmadge picture and rumour had it that he and Miss Talmadge were excellent friends, I do hope to their mutual satisfaction. She has joined so many in that big studio in the sky, but Mr Roland, I heard recently, is a hoary old man, wields a smart racquet at the smart Hollywood Racket, or should it be Racquet Club? Exit, unsmiling.



Gilbert Roland



Norma Talmadge

The party that evening was a small affair, but congenial. A few young men and women, aspiring to picture stardom. Some made

it in a big way and some, like me, were just hard-working actors with no frenzied drive to become Big Stars. Because I'd been a child star in New Zealand, stardom didn't really "turn me on" to the extent it did some. I deeply love, to this day, my years from 1924 to 1928, the fabulous Golden Era of the silent screen. The years after, to 1940, my last year in Hollywood, I count but little, especially the pathetic "dream factory" bit.

I had an acquaintance giving me a lift and leaving the affair quite early, when Clara saw me on the verandah, kissed my cheek and said to "be in touch real soon". I said "I sure would" and started down the steps when I nearly collided with a short, stocky, swarthy man.

"Oh dad," Clara called, "meet Tui. I told you about her, all the way from near the North Pole."

"South," I yelled.

"Okay, okay," yelled Clara, "but meet my dad, Bob." He took my arm, the steps were quite steep and the light dim, and walked with me down to the waiting car. That was my first meeting with Robert Walter Bow.



Bob Bow and daughter
Clara

Shortly afterwards work took a turn for the better and I was very busy for many weeks. Lew was beginning to feel left out and act hurt – as he wasn't a party-goer this was bound to happen. Knowing that his feelings for me were more serious than mine for him, I felt it was time to move on. I was making good money now, but sending every penny I could spare, mostly more than I really could, to New Zealand, but the sad letters kept coming and I always worried about the needs of my two brothers and Glory. I found a small, comfortable, low-rent apartment near the much loved Hollywood Boulevard, moved in, had the phone connected and was ready for all the work I could find.

Hollywood was an intimate, compact, friendly and fun-filled place then. I loved it dearly. It was still only 1925. Pictures were still fairly young, we were young and it was fun-time with lots of fun people. Leaving the rooming house made me feel better, partly because I would not be plagued by memories of the “bad scenes” every time I entered the place where I had so ignobly lost my virginity. Ho, hum, you may well say, but remember it was just the twenties – a different life.

I'd told Lew I would call him, but didn't do so for a long time and still wish I never had. But right now I was a social success, though I wasn't getting into the “class” pictures I would have liked. Still on the “stunting”, Western and Serial grind, few realised the dream of my life was to be a great tragedienne, a La Elenora Duse. I did some serious stage work seven or eight years later, which proved I had the talent in both tragedy and comedy, but fate decreed otherwise.

Despite my slight disappointment career-wise, there was fun to be had in life and we, a few close friends staying together, were having it. Ken Maynard, who was new to Hollywood and pictures, but not to circus and rodeos in which fields he was tops, had recently met up with us. I'm sure he looked on that as a mixed blessing. We decided to give him a welcome to his newly acquired apartment. As we'd worked that day we were still in make-up and costume, also slightly tipsy. It was very late to be

calling, about midnight, but in our frame of mind that was totally unimportant. His flat was street level, so we decided the window was the best means of access. Those days who bothered to lock up? Banging on the window, we opened it and climbed through. Understandably startled, he jumped from his bed and, turning on the light, said,

“What the hell?”

We explained in a somewhat muddled chorus that we were happy and so should he be and he was a swell guy - we had accepted him. So kind of us. Gin was produced and poured into anything that would hold it. Ken grinned, said he was honoured, but as he had an early call he'd put the coffee pot on. About six of us had squeezed into the tiny apartment and the party quickly got going. We didn't bother to answer the knocks on the door, peremptory though they were.



Kan Maynard



Sid Grauman

The party ended suddenly. The coffee started to boil over, one of the cowboys had his lasso and attempted to throw the noose over the coffee pot. Being more than somewhat off form, his aim was poor and he roped the gas jet, pulling it clean out of

the stove. The escaping gas lit up a lovely stream which no one knew how to turn off. We decided the best thing was to tell the landlady her apartment house was going up in gas. She let out an ungodly screech, grabbed the telephone and called the fire department, police and probably others. We thought it time to leave. After all we had thought it our duty to let her know and she evidently was not the grateful sort. We never did call again. Ken was “asked out”, despite his relative innocence. He was a darling. I hope he’s still around somewhere making people happy - he had a knack for it.

Playful pranks, or maybe I should say inane, bath-tub gin inspired gags, were quite a popular pastime and poor Sid Grauman, of the famous theatres, came in for his share. This may seem incredible, even for the early twenties, but “I was dere Sharlie.” A group of us had the playful little habit of coming from the studio at about ten or eleven p.m., driving in an open car, screech to a halt (a couple of times we even fired off blanks in western six-shooters) yipping and hooting as if it wasn’t enough doing chases out at Saugas, the back lot. Sid, long-suffering but good-natured, would come running out of his office to the forecourt of the Egyptian Theatre, his wild hair standing on end and he’d howl,

“Boys, girls, please, enough already, Go home. Come back and see the picture in the day time, for nothing, but don’t scare the customers.” He was the smallest man with the wildest hair we were ever to see until the 1960s and 70s. We loved him.

The Egyptian Theatre was THE theatre on Hollywood Boulevard for years, until he built his very famous Chinese Theatre, with its tinsel and glitter, famous mainly for the foot and hand prints of stars in the cement of its forecourt. By then such tom-fooleries as we indulged in years ago would certainly have landed us in the “cooler”. With all of our sky-larking, we did work hard while we were at it. Sometimes, in order to finish on schedule, we worked eighteen hours with only short food breaks. I was fortunate to be working so much as movies were moving

into the doldrums. There were a vast number of films being made, but the quality was being sacrificed to quantity.

Occasionally I still dropped by the Philbins', I'd had to give the pup Glory had sent me to Mary, who loved it and gave it a good home. I have a newspaper picture taken of her with it. It was no fault of the little dog's or of Glory's but the wee thing had cost me dear, by the standards of the days, anyway. I didn't see much of Mary as she was being wooed by one of Uncle Carl's imports whom I considered a ludicrous creep, with quite good reason. He did not know me personally, having met me only once or twice at Mary's home, but he had a nasty mind and a nastier tongue. He invented some scandalous slander about me and passed it on to Mary, but it didn't accomplish what he had hoped. I'll always remember the Philbins with gratitude, but that Czech fink, Paul Kohner, he's another case. He sure wasn't even remotely in Irving Thalberg's class.

One Sunday, on the streetcar going to the Philbins' for dinner and croquet shortly after I'd arrived in Hollywood, a bosomy blonde approached me - pressed a calling card into my hand with a broad smile. In a low tone she said,

"Use it soon, dearie," and quickly got off the car.

Astonished I read the pasteboard, which contained a telephone number and address and contained the information that Madam So and So gave free advice and a friendly ear to young persons in trouble, wanting a well-paid career. I showed it to Mr and Mrs Philbin, who promptly tore it to pieces. Amazed, I asked why. They told me then, with great concern, of the white slave traffic that really did go on. Young women like myself, without families and far from home were doped and taken mainly to South American countries for the purposes of prostitution. I was aghast and certainly not quite so friendly to strangers for awhile.

It wasn't long before I moved again. I was working constantly and seemed always to be making new friends and acquaintances. I had quite a bit of work with an independent company headed

by Mr Van Pelt at FBO or "poverty row", it was the same thing to me, making several pictures. I could give a few of the working titles, but they would mean nothing. I have no idea who released them or under what name. So many "quickies" were made this way to satisfy a growing market. By 1919 Hollywood was producing eighty per cent of the world market films.¹⁴



JOE ROCK

presents

FEARLESS

in

**"The
Love Fighter"**

George Larkin, Florence Ulric
Sylvia Nadina, Tui Lorraine
Burton Rupp

12-2 Reel Van Pelt Productions

Distributed by

Chesterfield Motion Pictures Corporation

1540 Broadway

New York



Tui Lorraine as Fifi in *The Love Fighter*



Daisy (Tui) steals the pearls in *A Dumb Romeo*



In the publicity poster (but not in the film) Fearless apprehends Daisy the pearl thief, played by Tui Lorraine.



Tui Lorraine as Daisy in "A Dumb Romeo" (1926).



Tui escapes over a clothes line in *A Dumb Romeo*.

I met the incredibly lovely and friendly Lillian Gish at Metro Goldwyn Mayer, a firm which was still in its infancy but growing fast. She was introduced to Hollywood by D.W. Griffith, who was not heard of much in 1925, but he established many stars and great movies just before the twenties. I'm sure almost anyone interested in "silents" will be aware of his great contribution. Miss Gish was signed to MGM to make several films, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The White Sister* and *Romola*, which in my opinion, were her greatest. The photography of these films has never been surpassed. The impact on me was greater than the later colour.

Ronald Colman was leading man in *Romola*, with William Powell a nasty, but excellent "heavy". I hadn't seen him before, but he certainly became very famous later, due mainly to *The Thin Man* series with Myrna Loy, who also proved in this series that she did not have to be a heavy oriental to do excellent work.



Lillian Gish



Ronald Colman



William Powell



Myrna Loy

Lillian autographed several photographs for me, gave me excellent and sound advice and was kind enough to write to me from New York because I'd caught cold during filming, telling me to wear warm underwear as California had a tricky climate. She could say that again, but it wasn't only the climate. I still treasure the letter and pictures. I'm delighted to hear that Lillian is still in the flicks now and then.

Those early days with Glory playing for the silents had indeed implanted the drug of films in my blood. "Talkies" never have given me the thrill and pleasure I got from the silents. I know there are a few left who feel the same way but not for long. We are a fast dying race. Several people I met at MGM became friends of long standing and others, naturally, were just passing acquaintances. Rosemary Theby was friendly. We had quite a long yarn and she autographed my book, because I told her my elder brother had quite a crush on her. I have no idea what happened to her. Blanch Sweet and Marion Davies were out there then. I think Miss Sweet retired, but Marion Davies was to go on much longer and we met again. I was taken somewhat aback for we passed as she was hurrying to the set and she simply stuck her tongue out at me. Strange behaviour, I thought, as I don't think I resembled Randolph Hearst in the slightest and still don't.

About this time I met Edmund Goulding, his brother Chris, sister Iris and their mother. They became like family to me and I visited their home often. Eddie had started out as a writer. He wrote a story which was filmed and then published as a book called *Fury*, a sea story. I still treasure my autographed copy just as I do my copies of *Kindred of the Dust* and *Captain Scraggs*, by Peter B. Kyne and the play, *Shangi Gesture*, by friend John Colton, who also made Somerset Maugham's short story, *Rain*, into play and picture form. While Eddie was working with D.W. Griffith he got a chance to direct, becoming a very fine director indeed. I worked with him in a picture called *Diamond Handcuffs* with Lionel Barrymore and Pauline Stark. I've never

seen it or heard of it since.¹⁵ There was a certain strangeness in the Goulding family, but a great deal of talent also. Eddie directed a number of very good pictures starring Gloria Swanson, even writing a lovely song for her to sing in one. The song's title was *Love Your Magic Spell is Everywhere*. Eddie was a very sexy man as I'm sure many ladies along the boulevards could have told and he was all for teaching me a few facts of life. So many folk seemed extremely anxious to do just that and they were not all men either. My, one had to be wary and sometimes even being wary was not enough.

I still worked at Universal and saw Mary Philbin looking noticeably excited one day on the set. She said if I waited awhile I would see and, perhaps even meet, the royal family of Hollywood. Naturally I waited and am glad I did, for it was the only time in my two decades at the celluloid village that I saw Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks senior. They graciously nodded in my general direction. On the theme of the major legends of the time, I was destined to see Rudolph Valentino only twice - once driving through the gates to Paramount and once on the boulevard, both times in the same yellow Rolls Royce. He was feuding with Paramount at the time and went off to New York, where he later died. I saw one of his funerals - he had several. This one was in Beverley Hills at the Good Shepherd Catholic Church at Bedford Drive. La Negri, in deep mourning weeds, was emoting beautifully and following the casket from the church, nearly swooned on the steps - but she didn't and the photographers had plenty of time. Poor Rudy! He had no grave of his own, so was put to rest in the Hollywood Cemetery in a grave belonging to somebody else, where he remained for the next twenty years. I heard the grave belonged to June Mathis, the writer, and as she died the following year, 1927, I have no idea how they sorted out that problem. No doubt there will be a beautiful story somewhere - Hollywood is full of them.



Edmund Goulding



Rudolph Valentino



Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks

Cecil B. De Mille was very busy during the early and middle twenties and although I didn't ever work for him, many of his splendid players had become good friends of mine. I enjoyed watching the spectacles in production, both in front of and behind the cameras - those spectacles were often far too big to make in a studio and one would find Mr De Mille out in a fifty acre paddock somewhere near Culver City, surrounded by everything imaginable to impress the world. Bill Crothers, De Mille's casting director, was a swell guy, especially for a top casting director. We had some great times and Bill was always along ready for a few laughs. I was a frequent visitor on the set of *King of Kings*. The film involved quite a bit of night work, so after filming was finished everyone would gather to relax over a few drinks. One morning, reading the newspaper while I drank my first cup of tea, I received a dreadful shock - I read that Bill had committed suicide. I just couldn't believe it - I knew poor Bill had a personal problem, but didn't realise how much it hurt - but the phone rang and a friend confirmed the tragic news.

Not everyone was as sensitive about the so-called flaws in their make-up - many married nice women and hid their differences under anything they could lay their hands on. But while on the subject of hidden idiosyncrasies, a character actor, playing an important leading role in *King of Kings*, stopped me near his dressing tent on one occasion. We'd met several times, so I thought nothing of it when he invited me to look at some new "stills" taken while he was dressed for his present role. We entered the tent, his flowing robes trailing. Suddenly he turned to face me, one hand had pulled his garments above his waist, the other hand was extremely busy pulling something rather more intimate. Speechless, I couldn't reply to his gasping suggestion that I try the same exercise. (I'm dying to say, "rooted to the spot", but feel too embarrassed.) I stumbled from the tent and fled to where my friends were doing a scene. Strangely I was too embarrassed to ever mention this little byplay to anyone, but made darn sure I was never alone with him again. He was so

overtly respectable, a good family man and a famous European theatrical one at that, but in later years stories were circulated and I knew it was not my fatal charms alone that made him break out.

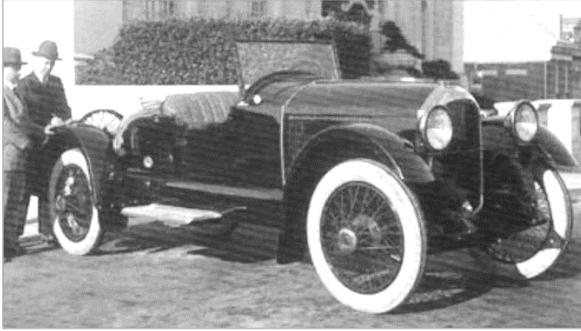
De Mille did interview me for a part at one time, but it all fell to pieces when he asked me if I could act. I was surprised and replied that I thought he should be the better judge of that. Neither of us seemed much interested in the other so that was that.

Clara called to tell me she had bought a Spanish style house on Bedford Drive in Beverley Hills. She was working extremely hard after scoring a great hit with Eleanor Glyn's *It* and was now busy preparing for a war aviation picture, *Wings*.

"I'm giving a dinner party tomorrow night," she said. "Be a pal, bring your uke and sing for us."

Happily I agreed. I too, was working hard, doing the character ingenue in *Sunshine of Paradise Alley* for Chadwick Pictures.¹⁶ Jack Nelson was the director. It was an original story by Josephine Quirk and a very successful photoplay. Barbara Bedford, Lydia Yeamens-Titus, Lucille Lee Stewart (Anita Stewart's sister) and several other fine performers made it "work". I was sending what money I could to Glory, but by now had a nice two-storey bungalow and employed "help", which was necessary as I was so busy. I had also bought my first second-hand auto and was extremely proud of it.

I've already stated that I was a good driver, so I bought a Paige racing car which had won several races at Daytona Beach, Florida. It was low slung, you had to sit on the floor and only had room for two passengers. An endless bonnet covered eight cylinders – it was a thrill I'll never forget owning that buggy. Later I had new and elegant cars, but they never meant to me what that Paige did. Clara had a Stutz Bearcat, a Lincoln Phaeton and a chauffeur, a swell guy named Herbert. The nearest I came to all that was that our sports cars were the same colour, blue. Anyway I was doing okay and liked being busy with radio as well as films.



A 1922 Paige

I had no trouble finding Clara's new house. It was single storey, but spread over a fair area. I parked in the drive, rang the bell and Clara's father, Bob opened the door. He took my hand and drew me inside. The light was dim, but when my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, I saw a tall, extremely handsome young man curled around the settee. As we approached, he unfurled himself and rose – he sure was tall: Bob was a blunt man who never stood on ceremony so he said merely,

“Tui, meet Gary.”



Gary Cooper

Gary smiled shyly, held out his hand and said, “The rest is Cooper, Tui. Clara's told me about you and how you came all the way from near the North Pole. Gee, that's a long way, I guess.” We all sat down.

“Not nearly as far away as where I did come from,” I growled, “Why can't that dizzy dame remember I came from New Zealand, last jump off before the SOUTH Pole.”

“Omygosh,” says Coop, in one breath. “That really is something.”

A lifetime later, nearly, we were to just miss each other in Sydney, Australia, during World War Two, but the day we met, Gary was unknown. He was doing a bit part in *Wings*, which went a long way toward making him a star. Darling Gary, one of the ones I loved then as I do now, he never changed. I wish Clara had married him, for her sake, or I wish I had the chance. He was a wonderful man, one of the best Hollywood has ever known. We sat for awhile and I chattered away, with Bob firmly planted between the two of us, trying to hold my hand. Clara was due from the studio, but late, rather a usual occurrence.

Suddenly a tornado, or so it seemed, streaked through the door, accompanied by the yapping of a chow dog, screeching of a parrot and excited voices all chattering at once. The redhead had arrived with all the gusto and chaos which usually surrounded her. She flew over to Gary, throwing me a “line” on the way,

“Hi, Tui, bring the uke?”

I nodded, but she had thrown herself down beside Gary and was kissing his cheek, forehead and generally fussing over him. Gary was shy, a fact that is generally known, but I could see he was really “gone” on Clara, which was nothing unusual - half the male world was. Three people had arrived with Clara, a man and two women. The lovely ladies I knew from the studio, Nancy Carroll and the dark and beautiful Kay Francis. The man was a quiet, rugged looking fellow, Victor Fleming, a director who was to make movie history nearly a decade later with *Gone with the Wind*.

The maid called that dinner was ready so we ate, talking movies all the while. We argued, debated, was Emil Jannings the greatest screen character actor alive, yes? no? of course he was! My two years in Hollywood, tough or not, had still left me fairly naïve. Innocently I asked the name of the best actress of the time, Vicki (the name we called Victor) made a noise

suspiciously like a giggle and he wasn't the type. Gary looked into space as though he was sleepwalking. It was my turn for "omygosh". Three very important female stars just sat waiting for my other foot to go into my mouth. I didn't disappoint them,

"Pola Negri?" I said tentatively.

Clara shrieked with laughter. A little confused I looked at the other ladies. I must say they were not quite as amused and who could blame them, after all they all vied for top billing at Paramount. I loved those two girls forever after, for not throwing their soup over me.



Nancy Carroll



Kay Francis

Vicki rather neatly changed the subject, saying he was reading a wonderful script, *The Way of all Flesh*. Paramount wanted him to direct Emil Jannings in it. They did it in 1927 and won an Oscar for it. That was the year of the first Oscars. Pickford, Fairbanks, L.B. Mayer and a few others at the top, including directors and writers, formed what we now know as the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences and "Oscar" was born. I have watched with interest through the years the winners of that

award. Certainly for the first couple of decades they were bestowed on the BEST. Since World War Two, in a few instances, I'm not too sure.

As I said Emil Jannings received the first for best actor, Janet Gaynor won best actress for *Seventh Heaven* and *Sunrise*. I mention these because at that dinner we discussed another great movie, my beloved *Wings*. *Wings* and *Sunrise* both received Oscars for outstanding, or best productions. At dinner Clara and Gary, whose part was small, but "telling", talked his scenes over. It sounded a thrilling epic and believe me it was. Buddy Rogers and Dick Arlen were the leading men, Jobyna Ralston the "other girl". William Wellman directed and between them all they made *Wings* the greatest ever war aviation film, hence the Oscar. I don't believe William Wellman was ever given full credit for his glorious work on this and perhaps, other pictures. The mists of time have shrouded the fact that Billy Wellman wrote the original story of *A Star is Born*: made a decade later by Janet Gaynor and more than a decade later again, by Judy Garland. His story was followed closely by these two, but I've no idea who wrote the mish-mash made recently by Barbra Streisand under the same title.

Wellman was a flyer with a branch of Lafayette Escadrille in World War One, so knew what he was about with *Wings*. John Monk Saunders wrote the book, of which I still have a copy. *Wings* was certainly among, if not the, best films of the "silent" era. It had superb sound-effects and background music and with the dawn patrol scene, the curtains opened wider, making the screen bigger, with great effect, another first and possibly the forerunner of the wide screen.

We finished dinner and the champagne, moved into the livingroom and started on the bacardi rum. It was okay too, as it came, via the bootlegger, straight from Cuba, we were told. Clara loved it, but I wasn't as enthusiastic about its taste. I recall I didn't turn it down, though. Clara waited for us to have a drink, then said,



Buddy Rogers and Clara Bow in *Wings*.



Richard Arlen



Jobyna Ralston

“I’ve something, no two things, to show you.”

We were in a large room and over near the corner, completely covered, was an object I couldn’t even guess at. Clara pulled off the cover with a grand flourish and there stood the first and most beautiful “Panatrophe” I’d ever seen. For those whose

education began after “Panatropes”, it was a large and very grand record player. Clara put on a jazz (what else) record and away we went – Charleston, black bottom and anything else we thought of. The second surprise was a “lulu”. A tiny room had been cut off from all light, papered with red, gold and black wallpaper and decorated with beautiful oriental drapes, soft carpets and a very wide lounge affair, covered with cushions was built right round the walls. Of course the air rang with “oohs”, “aahs” and wolf-whistles, but Clara just laughed and said it was a loving room, not a living room for anybody wanting it, when she wasn’t in it herself of course, as she took the cover from a huge picture of herself.

“The Chinese Room,” she laughed.

I don’t think Vicki approved too much; he was older and a bloody sight wiser than us. Gary just gulped and said,

“Aw, gee.”

Kay and Nancy trilled that they’d have to have a room like that, but I bet they didn’t. Like Gary, I gulped and knew I’d never be able to have one like it.

We all settled ourselves on the comfortable lounge and told jokes, mostly about stars and certainly about producers, as we continued drinking. Bob held my hand, Clara held Gary’s and Nancy and Kay said it wasn’t fair – next time they’d bring their own hand-holders for the Chinese Room. As the years passed that room could have told some great, and torrid tales. It was getting late and Vicki said he had to be at the studio early so would say goodnight. Clara escorted Kay and Nancy out to the Lincoln where Herbert waited to drive them home. We all kissed goodnight and Herbert backed out of the driveway.

I was just getting into my Paige when Clara called me back inside.

“I know it’s late, Tui, please stay here tonight and come with me to the studio tomorrow. I’ve something serious I want to talk with you about, huh, please?”

I agreed, knowing I had a few days off my own picture. Besides, I was becoming anxious on another subject. Bob had

gone to bed, a bit peeved because I refused to kiss him goodnight out in the dark. Clara grinned when I told her,

“You’d better watch it. I tell you he’s in love with you. Fancy you being my mother,” this with a gale of laughter.

I replied tartly, “Not on your goddam life. You’re older than I, even if it’s only a little, besides I don’t believe in marriage.”

Good humoured Clara just kept grinning,

“We’ll see.”

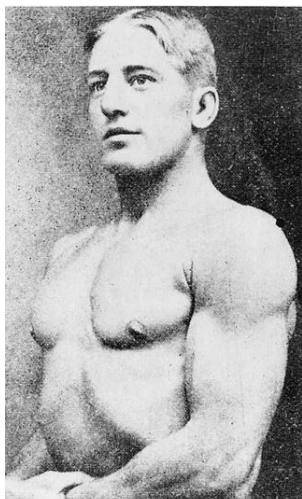
And we sure as hell did.

Here I’ll say although Clara and I were not a scrap alike, we hit it off fine. I know now we were both lonely and insecure people – she needed a mother and I needed a father – so I guess we drew together in our needs. She was the most unaffected, kind and natural “big star” certainly of our days, anyway. Volatile, unpredictable, at times very annoying, but never boring, not Clara. There were seldom quiet or peaceful times; it was perpetual motion of one sort or another. Bob couldn’t keep track of her, hard though he tried. He’d had a hard row to hoe being both mother and father. But it was the thrilling twenties and fun was the name of the game.

Next morning as Herbert drove us to Paramount Studios, Clara asked me if I’d come to live with her and Bob. Remarking on how well we got along, she said I was so seldom at my duplex it would save me money and I could help her out, answering the telephone. We’d be real buddies, just like in the story of *Wings*.

I was surprised and flattered, but reluctant. I explained I liked my lifestyle, so free, comfortable and busy, but I’d think it over anyway. She seemed disappointed but soon cheered up. We were on Hollywood Boulevard by now, just passing the El Capitan Theatre, near Highland Avenue. It was newly finished and looked grand – shiny new. I was to be guest in Stan Laurel’s party for the opening night a few days later. What a magnificent opening for a new theatre – the internationally famous Andre Charlot Revue of 1926.¹⁷ Clara looked disinterested, or rather, for her, sulky, when I told her I was going. She “guessed she

would get around to it later”. I had felt a bit uneasy refusing her kind offer and explained further that I had a few good friends I liked to meet with and entertain, but I did not think they would interest her.



Reginald "Snowy" Baker

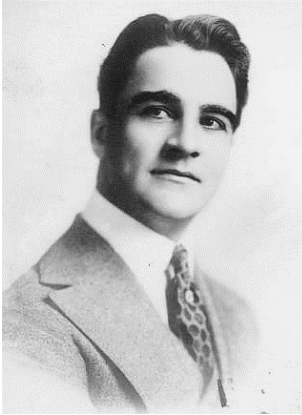
I'd entertained Snowy Baker, the then famous Australian horseman, to dinner at my duplex. He lived for most of the time at the Uplifters Club, a swanky polo-set joint in one of the canyons on the way to Santa Monica and the sea. Snowy and I talked about show-biz in Australasia. We had a few mutual acquaintances "down under", my cook had made a nice dinner and we had a pleasant few hours with a few drinks. I saw Snowy a few times after that, we liked each other as pals, though he was an older man and we had only the Southern Cross in common.¹⁸

Clara was far too restless to enjoy such evenings - it was go, go, go all the time. I did see Snowy at the Uplifters Club one day. Clara had asked me to take a drive out there with her as she had to see Will Rogers, whom I was pleased to meet, if only once before his death.

I was a true Hollywood person now, and loved it enormously, but I'd not lost track of all my earlier acquaintances. I still saw Larry and Diana Hughes occasionally and Florence Lawrence. Now and then I went to a party with the piano-playing lady, who had divorced and remarried, but still played the field. She was no shrinking violet and I sure learned a lot about life from her. I regularly attended meetings of the Catholic Motion Picture Actors Guild and we did several charity concerts each year.¹⁹ I don't think the Motion Pictures Actors Guild was yet in force. The Chinese Theatre was not yet in existence, but of course the

Egyptian Theatre was. I don't remember Woolworths being there in 1926, but it was now - Hollywood was growing now, too fast for some of us.

The El Capitan was the first live theatre and it thrilled me to be at the opening. I still worked occasionally at Universal, seeing old friends, Mary Philbin, Bill Desmond, Hoot Gibson, Slim Somerville, Herbie Rawlinson and a newcomer with us, the splendidly English actor, Percy Marmont. He'd hit it big with *If Winter Comes* and was as charming as his acting was good. I realised that in two short years I was already thinking in terms of "the good old days". Incredible.



Bill Desmond

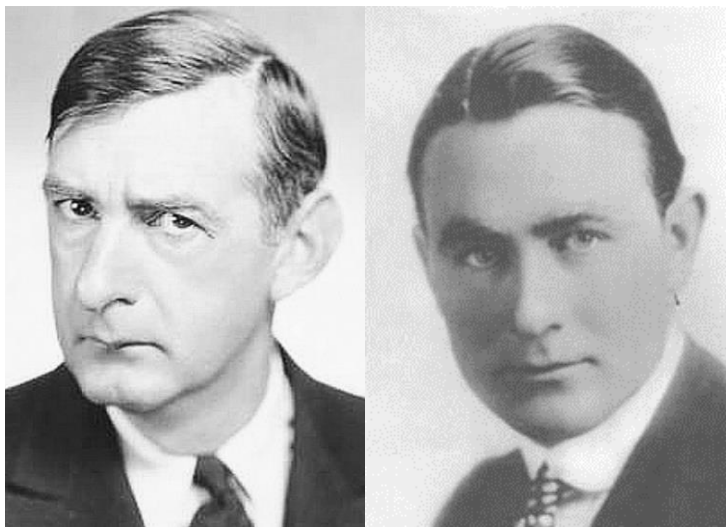


Hoot Gibson

Suddenly I started, Clara dug her elbow into my ribs and said, "Where the hell have you been? Day dreaming again?"

I flushed guiltily, apologised and at the same time realised we were entering those, so difficult, for some, to enter gates at Paramount. We drove to the set where Clara had to do a few extra shots for *It*. Antonio Moreno, her leading man, awaited her. While they talked I held back as I loathed the "dratsab". He had a venomous tongue and was a big-headed upstart. I wanted nothing to do with him. Clara understood when I told her of a

remark he'd made behind my back. Scandalous gossip usually got back to one. I just thought of him as a "tutai", a Maori word that you'd better not look up or you may be shocked; ah what the hell it only means shit and everyone does it.



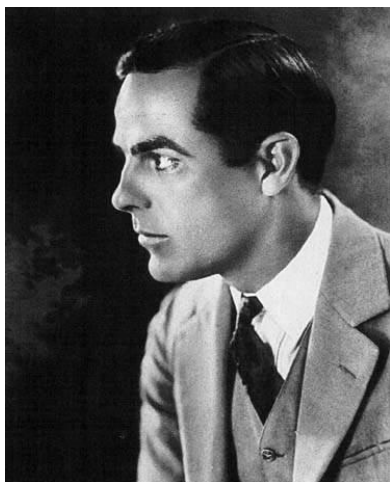
Slim Sommerville

Percy Marmont

With their arrangements over we went to Billy Wellman's office - him I adored. They discussed *Wings* and Billy said they would be off to Texas as soon as Clara had finished the last scenes for *It*. Some of the battle scenes were so tremendous they had to be done in large uninhabited areas, so Texas it was.

Herbert had parked the Lincoln, so Clara and I walked towards her dressing room. It was in a long line of them headed, of course, by Pola Negri's. Her car approached us as we walked, the driver slowed to let us pass and as we did, La Negri sharply pulled down the blind on our side. We laughed uproariously as usual. Poor Pola - I don't think she really approved of us. It wasn't surprising, there was quite an age difference and she apparently lacked a sense of humour. I read a news story a few

years ago which stated that she was quite a friend of Adolph Hitler's. I don't know if it was authentic, but who with a sense of humour could have been a friend of Hitler's?



Antonio Moreno



Pola Negri

As we entered the dressing room a magnificently beautiful, young woman, with fairly dark coloring passed us. Clara and she exchanged "Hi's," without much enthusiasm. I looked enquiringly at Clara who said,

"She's so damned beautiful, but they're not going to intimidate me with anyone else, even with Flo Ziegfeld's beauties."

"Who is she?" I asked.

"Louise Brooks. She's made several pictures and is good, I hear," Clara replied.

We seldom went to the movies those days. Seeing the rushes daily kept us somewhat aware, but how much went on the cutting room floor, I'm horrified to think. But we were too busy working and having fun - finding out just how good life could be if you were lucky. Believe me before "making it" a lot of luck was

involved, but once “there” it was bloody hard work and worry. Nineteen twenty-four to seven were my happiest years and I think I did some of my best work, such as it was, then. “Brooksie” (we called her that, but not to her face. She was too beautiful) stumbled on the steps and Clara laughed,

“I guess she’s human after all – she likes an occasional snort just as we do, eh?”

William Powell dropped in to see us and I threw myself all over him. I just loved that wonderful guy. I hope he’s enjoying his retirement in Palm Springs. He was such a dear man. Ricardo Cortez and Don Alvarado also called in and to my delight the three invited us to dinner in down-town Chinatown. Don, a pleasant, unassuming, but gorgeous man, was my partner and I’ve never had a nicer escort.



Louise Brooks



Ricardo Cortez

Clara’s dressing room was packed by now – most were small rooms, not built for entertaining. We all sat on the floor telling current stories about other actors and ourselves. One I recall best became a classic, although not on the set. Nita Naldi was the

vamp of the day - Theda Bara, Nita's predecessor, had left the scene altogether. Nita was at Paramount at this time and I'd seen her around quite often. The story, which I know to be true, goes that Nita was dressed to the eyelashes in the classic vamp mode for a scene - long trailing slinky black gown, two-foot long cigarette-holder and large double string of pearls. Slowly descending the staircase, eyes sexily half-closed, nostrils flaring, taking short, noisy puffs at the cigarette, all backgrounded by sexy music, Nita toyed languidly with the beautiful pearls, but suddenly she stumbled. Grasping the banister, she dropped the long holder, broke the string of the pearls in her frenzy to keep from falling and, looking from the pearls bouncing merrily down the stairway, Nita faced straight into the camera and gasped, "Jesus, me beads."



Nita Naldi



Don Alvarado

This gave us all a hearty laugh in the dressing room before we went for our Chinatown dinner. I had an added bonus that evening. Getting out of the car I stumbled and twisted my ankle. Poor, good-natured Don Alvarado carried me up the stairs, sat

me in a chair and dampened his breast-pocket handkerchief to tie around the offending limb. Needless to say I loved all this attention from a charming and handsome young man. I kept the handkerchief for years.

By now I was collecting quite a number of beaux and Bob wasn't too happy about it. He was becoming quite possessive as he was with Clara which just made me more happy about having my own abode. I did go with him to the movies and dinner, but not often.

Clara left for Texas the following week and I was back on my job with *Sunshine of Paradise Alley*. A few days later I thought again of my old boyfriend, Lew Penn and how nice it would be to see him again. I had not done so for about a year, so I called him that evening. He seemed delighted to hear from me and gladly accepted a home dinner date for the following night. Is it fate? I don't know what made me call that good dear chap out of the blue like that. I had a coterie of nice gentlemen friends and a few "good sport" girlfriends. I could have called one of these, but I was suddenly longing to see a kind and dear friend whom I felt I'd neglected since "getting into the swim" and becoming a bit popular.

Next day was fine and warm, a typical sunny Southern Californian day, with blue sky that you could actually see. I gave my cook instructions about the dinner and then went to lunch with Count Mario Caracciolo, Carlos Durand, Patricia Daly and several other friends. The count had dropped his title and his last name, simply calling himself Mario Carillo. From an old and noble Italian family, he was then in his forties, handsome, charming and could be very imposing. I thought he was terrific and knew he was smitten with me. He knelt on one knee and kissed my hand. It would have been foolish to have any illusions that his intentions were honourable and he didn't pretend they were, but it was nice to be courted by a noble man and that he was. He was also a fantastic raconteur, full of fun and charm. when Benito Mussolini came to power he seized all property and

money belonging to the Caracciolo family, leaving them penniless. Mario had been in the diplomatic Corps of the Royal regime and fled from Italy to the USA. Not knowing what to do for money he had become an actor, playing in many silent movies. Carlos was from South America and also was very charming and gallant. He and Mario were close friends and we were all great buddies. We went to Henri's for lunch, laughter and a bright time.

I must recount one of Mario's best stories. It was hilarious, but true and I always think it belongs in comic opera. Mario had done a little spying during World War One, both in and out of Italy. At the time of this story he was in Italy, which at that time was our ally. He accepted an invitation to attend a "swanky" soiree one evening, an invitation about which he was quite excited for very good reason.



Mario Carillo



Mata Hari

He was to meet and watch the dancing of the world's most famous femme fatale, Mata Hari. Secretly he had had orders to pursue, romance and then spy on the most famous spy of all time. He enjoyed her gyrations when dancing, but was more intent on meeting her. This accomplished, he was thrilled to

have his luncheon invitation accepted by the more than willing Mata Hari. Their luncheon was taken on the balcony of a lovely palace overlooking the city. Mario admitted to me he was enchanted by her and went flat out to get her to bed – the spying bit came second with him. Suddenly, during their conversation, Mata batted her lovely orbs at him and said,

“Count, I think you are interested in little secrets, yes? No?” She smiled, looking more tempting than ever.

Mario woke up with a jolt – he knew she knew he was a spy, so the two spies had a romantic dinner together, each fully aware of the other’s duty, enjoying every minute of it. The gallant count would never divulge whether he really did get her to bed, but knowing darling Mario well and long, I know what I’d bet on. I never tired of hearing this fascinating story, especially as Mario always drooled lasciviously when recounting it. Our own prolonged and gay luncheon over, we made several dates for the future and went our separate ways. The Boulevards, glistening and friendly in the dying rays of the sun, beckoned me home. I felt a little flutter of heart as I thought of seeing Lew.

“Tui! Tui! Are you alright?” The anxious voice of my dancer friend, who lived next door, seemed to come from far away. I was sobbing uncontrollably over the telephone which so recently had conveyed the shocking news. My brain was reeling, confused. I tried to fight back the sobs, but only managed to gasp,

“Oh, Dottie, Lew’s dead.”

Dottie put her arm around me and soothed my grief as best she could. She was a lovely, hard working girl, whose joy in life was dancing. She performed in the Dancheon and Marco Revues, staged elaborately in movie houses, usually before a high-class picture. She also danced in many musical movies. We had a good neighbour policy which sure paid off now. I couldn’t stop crying.

“Tui, what went wrong? Tell me about it – best to get it off your chest. So, between sobs, I did.

As I entered my apartment after leaving Henri's the luscious odour of cook's dinner floated out to meet me. After freshening up, I helped set the table, before the cook went home, leaving everything ready to be served. It was nearly six o'clock; I turned on the radio and leafed through a magazine without really seeing it. I rose to gaze from the front window as the lights began flickering on. The foothills were a deep blue and the tremendous white "Hollywoodland" sign (that's how it read then) gleamed down on us. Usually I loved this scene. Why was I so restless - almost apprehensive? Universal Studios were a few miles away over rough, narrow and crowded roads. I, unnecessarily, told myself I was impatient and a worrier.

Hours past - the food odour was now unappetizing and I was angry as well as uneasy. How very unlike Lew to be so late without calling. I started as the telephone rang,

"Yes, this is Tui Lorraine -" the male voice was unfamiliar.

"So sorry, Miss Lorraine, I don't know how to tell you - so much to do or else I'd have come over." My ears started buzzing, I knew. He spoke again,

"I knew Lew well - his friend and we worked together a lot. He told me he was having dinner with you tonight and he was very happy. As you know, he was very careful and good with his motor bike. Are you alright?"

I think I said yes, but that I must know what happened. He went on to tell me that Lew left the studio at about five, hurrying more than usual to keep our date; his side-car and a heavy truck collided. The dual rear wheels of the truck passed over his body and part of his head. He died instantly. His friend understood my silence and continued with details about the funeral parlour and burial. After expressions of deep condolence, he hung up. Suddenly the flood gates opened and I sobbed as I was not to do for many years. The movies lost the best cycle stuntman I've ever known and I my first sweetheart and a true friend. Some of the grief and feelings of guilt for that loss are still with me today.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A few weeks later Clara returned from Texas. I'd finished my role in *Sunshine of Paradise Alley* and was doing radio work and a live play. Bob Bow had dropped by several times, so knew of my loss. He was kind, but took the opportunity to say he'd be my boyfriend from now on. "That's what you think," I thought to myself. I tried not to dwell on Lew's death and after a short time began going out with friends again. I saw Mary Philbin from time to time and my piano playing friend, shy (?) Violet, took me to a few parties where I met new people. One, who was not well-known then, but was to become a great and fine director, was W.S. Van Dyke, Woody to his friends. He was a kind and good friend to me all my years in pictures.

At the time I met him he was newly at MGM to direct a western type actor named Tim McCoy. Woody was a fun-loving fellow who liked dancing, gin and music, hence his friendship with the piano player. We had some gay and hilarious times and I worked in many of his pictures over the years, but I was extremely unlucky one time when I was ill in bed with influenza. Woody visited me, sat beside me and offered me the lead in *White Shadows of The South Seas*. He'd often heard me sing Maori songs, seen me do Poi dances and thought me right for the part, coming from New Zealand. I cried at having to turn it down and always thought it a cruel loss, but I'd well and truly overstayed my visitor's visa, so I was afraid to leave the USA in case I may not be allowed to return. I kept these facts to myself, which was pretty foolish because I found later that Woody could have had MGM fix everything for me if I'd told him of the problem.

A large number of picture people were good pals and loved gathering for parties at the beach. I had a cottage at Santa Monica and often Victor (another Vicki) McLaglen, Eddie Goulding, Edmund Lowe, Stan Laurel and, of course, often their girlfriends, came down to join in a weenie-roast on the beach, followed by late-night swims in the warm water. Often our

swimming costumes were rather peculiar “get-ups” and sometimes we wore none, of course, but not on moonlight nights. Afterwards we raced back to the cottage for warmup drinks and fun and games. A mysterious lady flitted in and out of our parties. The only name anybody seemed to know her by was Miss Du Pont. This was the name she asked us to call her and it also appeared on the billings in the few silents she made. I was in her company many times, often with only three or four other people, but still it was always Miss Du Pont.



Edmund Lowe



Miss Du Pont

Broadway producer, Sam Harris gave a large party at which I met the internationally acclaimed Duncan sisters, Vivian and Rosetta. They did their own version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Topsy, by Rosetta and Eva by Vivian. They only used two characters from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for their stage work, but Universal decided to make a silent film version of the whole story with them. It was a pity they didn't wait for sound because hearing them was their major attraction - they made beautiful harmony with their songs. Vivian had a lovely voice. Their

gorgeous leading man was Nils Asther, from Sweden and this was his first part in USA, but certainly not his last. Nils and I became very close friends. He was pleasant and gallant, but almost too handsome. Sometimes he had to go to the lengths of sleeping on my living room couch to dodge the attentions of over-amorous ladies. He later married Vivian and they had a daughter. When sound took over the movies I heard no more of them. Nils had worked with Garbo at MGM and quite a few other big name actors - he will probably be best remembered for his part in *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* - but then faded out of the scene.



The Duncan sisters



Belle Bennett



NILS ASTHER.

The Duncan sisters seem almost entirely unremembered today, yet they were wined, dined and feted on two continents and were close friends of the then Prince of Wales, the late Duke of Windsor.

Both girls were brilliant on stage, I admired their work greatly and loved Vivian as a dear friend. Rosetta was a more brittle person and we did not like each other very much, but it made no difference to Viv's and my friendship.

Many of the top musicians also moved in the movie circles and Irving Caesar gave many elegant dinner parties. I also attended more than one party given by Sam Harris, who gave Jeanne Eagels and *Rain* (also known as Sadie Thompson) to the theatre. One evening Sam, Irving and one or two others took me to see *The Drunkard*, which was newly opened in theatre restaurant style and hugely popular for many years. I was thrilled to meet the great Belle Bennett with them. She was a truly wonderful actress - her silent picture *Stella Dallas* was a smash hit and rightly so. Her death in 1932 at the age of forty-one was a sad blow to the profession.



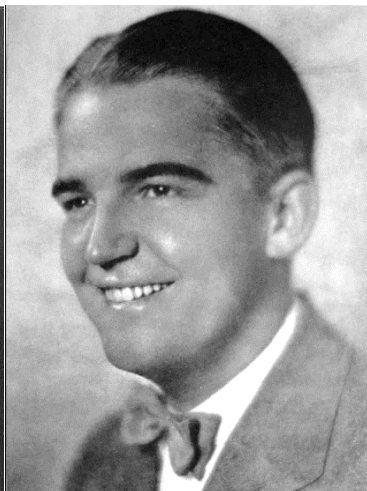
Irving Caesar



Jeanne Eagels



Leatrice Joy



Zez Confrey



Sam Coslow

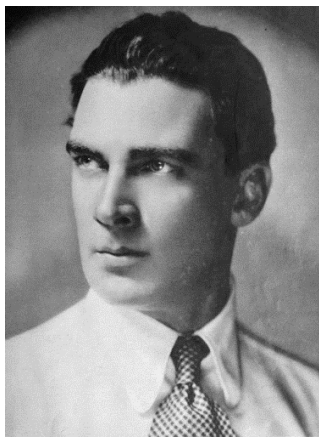


Fuzzy Knight

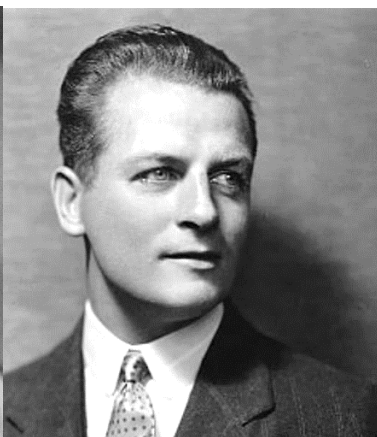
I was also introduced to a handsome piano playing composer named *Zez Confrey* who wrote *Kitten on the Keys*, *Stumbling* and many other tunes popular then. We had a small romance going and I was in love as usual, but it didn't last long - Zez was

a travelling man and far to fascinating to belong to one woman. I was always fascinated by musicians and another with whom I became friendly was Billy Joy, whose sister, Leatrice Joy, was an early star who was married for awhile to John Gilbert. They had a daughter.

Billy was an actor's agent who dabbled in songwriting. He wrote a sentimental little song to Leatrice and gave me a signed copy with an inscription which modesty precludes me from entering here. I thought him charming and obviously the feeling was mutual. Irving and Zez also gave me signed copies of some of their work, which I treasure. It gave me great pleasure when such musicians as Sam Coslow (*Just One More Chance*) and the irrepressible Fuzzy Knight dropped into my home for frequent evenings of drinks and music. Both Sam and Fuzzy were pianists. A few years later I also met the incredibly handsome Walter Pidgeon, who dressed in his stylish white suit and white hat, sang and played for a girlfriend and me. He mostly did stage musical shows in the early days. It took *Manhunt*, *Mrs Miniver* and World War Two to prove what a splendid and compelling dramatic actor Walter was. But I'm getting ahead of myself.



Walter Pidgeon



Reginald Denny

The boulevard was still a friendly place for those who knew it so well. Often I would see Reginald Denny, another Britisher from Universal, driving by and we'd yell and wave to each other. He was a friendly fellow with an engaging grin - immensely popular at the studio as well as with his fans.

By this time Lon Chaney senior had moved over to MGM, so I saw him often and worked with him once before he died. Clara was finishing up with *Wings*.

I had dinner with her and Bob at her home and as usual she was full of news. She had had a great time in Texas and was mobbed by fans. There was nothing unusual in that as we were continually dodging people even in Hollywood. I asked how her love life was - well I didn't really have to ask - the dear kid rattled on. When Bob went out we got down to cases and I told her I had a crush on Dick Arlen. Clara shrieked with glee,

"Hah, you'll have to fight Jobyna Ralston to get near him," she giggled. "They're really stuck since working on *Wings*!"

I sniffed and said it didn't matter anyway, but it did and Richard Arlen was the only actor I was ever in love with, even if it wasn't a grand passion. He would be more surprised than anybody if he knew, because I stood him up one night. He didn't know that Clara had told me about Jobyna, whom he later married. I did love him I think, so much so that I was afraid to go to his dressing room - not of him, but of what I may do - who wants a one night stand with someone one loves?

Clara had decided to give a dinner party and had invited Joan Crawford, a very up and coming young player who lived on the next street to the Bow place. Joan was also bringing her boyfriend, Douglas Fairbanks junior. We ran into Sally Eilers, who lived nearby and asked her, but she had a previous date. Gary Cooper was still "the one" with Clara and naturally was there. A prominent magazine journalist, Adela Rogers St. Johns, wanted to write a big story about Clara for *Liberty*, a very popular five-cent magazine, so Clara invited her to the dinner party in

order for her to gather background material on her life, friends and work.

I had not met Joan before, but liked her immediately. She was a sweet unspoiled girl then and we went to a few parties at her home. We were all crooner-crazy - I was very dedicated to Bing Crosby and Tony Martin was my next choice.



Joan Crawford

Douglas Fairbanks jr

The dinner party was a great success. Adela made a date for the following week to start interviews. I still have a copy of the article. A few of her remarks about me were more than a little incorrect, but some I consider quite flattering. Although I didn't know Fairbanks well, he seemed nice enough, but I couldn't help but feel both he and his father were very society-minded. I have never been able to care for jet-set society antics, but each to his own taste.

After dinner the conversation moved around to the Charlot Revue, the opening of the new El Capitan Theatre and what a welcome addition it was as Hollywood's first live theatre. I shone here, as I was the only one present who attended the opening,

met the fantastic cast and was lucky enough to be invited to the party afterwards. This was the beginning of a wonderful friendship, much fun and a lot of happiness for me. The Charlot's Revue of 1926 starred Beatrice (Lady Peel) Lillie, Jack Buchanan and Gertrude Lawrence... what glorious memories.



Sally Eilers



Adela Rogers St Johns

CHAPTER TWELVE

The opening night of the revue at El Capitan was a swanky affair which impressed even I, a sworn bohemian given to wearing sport clothes rather than evening dress which I loathed when young. I was used, even as a child, to seeing very fine performers and even working with some of them, but that particular revue was unforgettable. Bea Lillie was the most brilliant comedienne I have ever seen. Like Jack Benny, she had only to stand and look at an audience to bring forth gales of laughter. She was slim, elegant, highly sophisticated, an eccentric completely without ego, warm and generous and from her first

performance in Hollywood I was her enchanted slave. As I leaf through the program of that delightful performance, my throat tightens as I think of what fate had in store for so many of that wonderful cast. Jack Buchanan, the epitome of gentlemanly perfection, dance ensembles and romantic persuasions. Then Gertrude, dear extrovert Gertie, with her own brand of acting, living and giving - beautiful to watch and listen to, who even on her death-bed thought of others. Starring on Broadway with Yul Brynner in *The King And I*, she was ill and knew she would die. Her last request was that Yul should be given star billing in the play. He certainly earned it and so did Broadway. The night Gertrude Lawrence died, the famous White Way turned out all its lights in deference to its beloved daughter from across the sea. Also that night, Noël Coward's heart was broken - their bond was very deep.

But the revue and party in 1926 was years before all this and we were young and gay. Bea always gave such fun parties. There were others in the cast who were destined to go on to greater fame. Young Hugh Sinclair played piano for one of Bea's screamingly funny sketches and later went on to stardom in English movies. Eric Blore, a very good comedian, later stayed in and bolstered many movies with his unique brand of comedy.

At Clara's party her guests were interested to hear about my opening night adventures. Joan, particularly wanted all the details, but Clara, as usual was restive. She and Gary were gazing at each other with that "it" thing Mrs Eleanor Glyn had made famous - both Clara and she had a big hit with *It*. Clara beckoned to Coop and said,

"Rave on, Tui. I know you love the stage - we'll talk here awhile."

And promptly propelled herself and Gary into the famous Chinese room. I continued with my story. After the show, with star-dust in my eyes, I went backstage alone. My friends had other arrangements and that was okay by me. Many picture-folk were there, full of enthusiastic, but richly deserved,

compliments. Bea's dressing-room door was wide open and the room jammed with admirers. I really was shy - I know it seems absurd - and what seems even more silly is that I still am in some circumstances. I hung back, listening and taking in the glittering scene - catching the excitement, the smell of grease paint and listening to Bea's so very precise English voice, always sounding as though it were, ever so slightly, mocking, as were her beautiful slanting pixie eyes. The crowd began to disperse, the last two or three saying goodnight and departing.



Beatrice Lillie

Bea looked at me quizzically and said,

“Well... who are you?”

Suddenly the spell was broken. I stammered,

“Oh, sorry, I’m nobody. Well not much anyway.... I work in pictures and that....” I finished lamely. Bea laughed out loud,

“Well you’re the first person I’ve met in the States who admits to being nobody. Come in, sit down while I take off my make-up. You don’t have an American accent, where are you from?” I felt flushed and at a distinct disadvantage. It was no fault of Bea’s - her august presence was enough to disarm me.

“I’m from New Zealand. I’ve been here two years.”

“Oh,” said Bea, “Isn’t that where the kangaroos are?” My senses returned with a rush, settling my nerves, Oh, God, I thought. Here we go again!

“No,” I was patient now, “You’re thinking of Australia - I’ve never been there. Clara always thinks New Zealand is near the North Pole.”

“Who’s Clara - and I do have an idea where New Zealand is,” Bea teased.

“Clara is Clara Bow. She’s in pictures too.”

Bea laughed, “Yes, I guess she is. So you’re close buddies?” I nodded.

She was now ready to go home to her party. To my stunned surprise and pleasure, she asked me to go along with her. Jack and Gertie were talking with great absorption in a dressing room. Bea introduced us and collected them. The chauffeured limousine was waiting and we were on our way for a spirited night of fun.

The automobile was large - one of those with two seats backing the driver, facing the passengers to the rear seat. Jack and Gertie were curious about me, but I was embarrassingly tongue-tied with awe - three such wonderful stars - they literally glittered before my eyes. Bea with that amused grin gave a passing thumb-nail sketch of what little she knew. Gertie patted me on the head, Jack looked vague and then all three completely

forgot me, proceeding to chatter about their fellow performers, laughing hugely in the process. I watched the Hollywood Boulevard lights flash by and realised I had no idea of Miss Lillie's address. The boulevard ended, a road turned right, and to my surprise, we did too. A short distance further, we turned right again onto what I can only call a narrow, rough metal track, steep and winding around a small hill. We reached a large mansion, with a lot of parking space in front, but obviously very little space behind before reaching again for the sky. I'd noticed the monstrosity many times while driving by when I lived in Laurel Canyon and visited Clara in Bessie Love's log cabin. This large home was a brownish colored stucco, which made it look quite hideous in daylight, however, tonight, floodlights illuminated the place and cars were everywhere they could find a space.

The sound of music and laughter filtered out as we alighted and I felt excited as I thought of the fun ahead, not to mention a few "snorts", of which I was beginning to have a goodly amount these days. Sadly, it was the "in" thing to keep a silver flask in the bag or hip pocket. One needed a "charge" to keep up with the roaring twenties and I was no exception. The feeling of the time, which I shared, was to hell with the Volstead Act, that enforced eighteenth (prohibition) amendment. If "they" could refuse to wait for the soldiers to come home from World War One before holding the vote, we could refuse to uphold their stupid Volstead Act. Pushing that act through is one of the main ills still blighting the once glorious United States of America today - but more of this subject later.

The mansion was large inside, with a huge living room which could be turned into a ballroom as it was this night. The most popular music at the time was Hawaiian music and Bing Crosby - Bing was not there, but Sol Hoopii and his Hawaiian Quartet were and it was grand. The place was packed with most of the Revue cast and many movie folk. Bea, Gertie, Jack and I were immediately given drinks. I sure needed one - I was dry from

excitement. It was a Saturday night and knowing the place and times I knew it would be a very late party indeed – I wasn't disappointed. I spoke to a few acquaintances, then Bea asked me to come upstairs to meet her family.

The broad stairway led to a wide balcony which ran along two sides of the building. The front was nearly all glass, giving a magnificent view of Hollywood looking south towards Baldwin Hills – it was especially breathtaking at night. The west wall had high, long windows, some of them stained glass, to let in maximum light. From the north and east balconies were the entrances to guest rooms, a separate apartment for Bea, one for her mother and rooms for Bea's five year old son, the Honourable Bobby Peel.

Despite the hilarity downstairs only the slightest sound was audible as Bea opened the door to Bobby's quarters, due to good sound proofing. Robert was asleep and looking down at him I saw a very handsome little boy, who looked remarkably like his mother. Bea's pixie face had lost all its mockery and glowed with a softness I was only to see when Robert was concerned. A woman rose from a chair and Bea introduced me to Aunt Jessie, Bobby's nanny. We tiptoed out and continued along the balcony. Bea knocked on another door and when it opened we were confronted with her mother, Lucie, another version of Bea, but older. We sat down comfortably in Mrs Lillie's apartment while Bea introduced us and explained who I was. Dear, sweet Lucie came over, kissed me and said in the most English of voices,

“You poor darling. So far away from home and only a baby yet. I'll just have to be your American mother and you can call me Lucie. You must come here whenever you wish.”

I loved her immediately – she was so warm and kind. I was to spend many relaxed and enjoyable hours with Lucie, Bobby and Aunt Jessie when Bea was busy. They are such clear and treasured memories even now – the baby turtles we played with

in the small backyard, the tiny chameleons I brought back from Mexico City for Bobby, the lazy sunshine, all were wonderful.

After chatting for a few minutes we returned to the party, which Bea's very efficient secretary, Sadie, was keeping well in hand until Bea could take over. The music was playing, food and liquor flowing and I joined into the fray with a vengeance. It was all very gay - dancing, as at most twenties parties was the craze and crazy Bea circulated for awhile, then, glass in hand, propped herself against one of the balcony columns, looking like an elegant, slender reed, holding the column up. By this time I was more than a little merry myself.



Gertrude Lawrence



Jack Buchanan

Gertie and Jack danced together almost exclusively. At one point they flopped on a couch next to me and Gertie gave me a hug, saying,

“Little lost thing - tell us about yourself.” Jack eyed me mildly and said,

“I’ll get us a drink.”

I was just starting to tell Gertrude about Glory's shows in New Zealand, when Jack returned with a waiter and three glasses. He sat down whereupon Gertie exclaimed,

"Darling, where have you been? I've missed you."

I turned to watch the dancers when I heard a clink. Jack and Gertie were making a toast about something, but unfortunately the lovely fine glasses were not up to their exuberance. Jack's glass broke and he let out an "ouch" as a trickle of blood appeared on a small cut on his hand. Gertrude immediately went into her act, fussing as though poor Jack had just severed a hand at the wrist. It was really killing. I looked at the cut with scorn. Remembering how it had been in New Zealand - food poisoning, cuts, bruises, torn ligaments in both wrists, colds and even influenza, on I went. I had to or we wouldn't eat or even get to the next town.

I returned to the present with a start - Gertie was saying, frantically,

"But darling, you might get blood poisoning."

Jack was protesting mildly, putting his handkerchief over the offending cut. He did most things mildly, except saving money. I understand.

"I'll ask Beatrice watcha do," I slurred and slid over to Bea's favorite spot, holding the column.

"Ah, where have you been?" she asked in precise accents.

Somewhat thickly I told her of the toast tragedy. Bea giggled,

"Those two; come we'll take them to my bathroom for a bandage. Good thing Noël isn't here or there would be bigger drama," and she chuckled deliciously.

"Whoosh Noël," I slurred.

"Oh, Noël Coward, a charming clever fellow, writer, actor, you name it. He's coming out here soon - you'll like each other. He's mad about Gertie."

I allowed I could understand that. Bea looked at me - my eyes, never too good, were distinctly blurry by now, nevertheless

I thought her look had a mocking glint, “Tui, I think you’re a wee bit tiddly. You’d best stay here tonight, it’s safer.”

I mumbled something about liking my own bed, which was true, but Bea just glided over to where the action was four deep around Jack and Gertie. I trailed, weaving a little, after Bea, who was declaiming,

“Don’t be silly you two. Come with Lady Peel to the bathroom, she’ll fix you up.”

Peals of laughter greeted this little joke as we all followed the distinguished trio to the bathroom, crowded together hardly able to breathe, let alone move, and watched fascinated as Gertie, who insisted on doing it herself, bathed and bandaged the tiny cut with concern completely out of proportion to its infinitesimal significance. Poor Jack looked dazed and overwhelmed by all this lovely fuss. Somebody squealed,

“Well, that’s that – on with the motley.”

We scattered downstairs, going into a mad Charleston to Sol Hoopii’s Hawaiian music. I don’t think the music matched the dance, but at this point who the hell cared?

I lay perfectly still – I had to – my head was chained to the bed and felt like a big lump of throbbing lead. I warily opened one bloodshot eye, then the other. Finally they became focused at the same time on the same thing, a strange ceiling. My brain began to function at last and I sat up suddenly – the room whirled and with a groan I fell back on the pillow. A few moments later, cautiously, I sat up again and looked around. The other bed was occupied by a soundly sleeping Beatrice Lillie. Only my shoes and gown had been removed so I didn’t have much dressing to do. Feeling ghastly, I let myself out of the suite and banged straight into Lucie, who scolded me a little about the amount I had drunk. Seeing my embarrassment, she smiled, put her arm around my shoulders and said,

“Let’s get some coffee and breakfast, eh?”

I nearly threw up there and then. I looked at my watch – it was nearly noon. Thick-tongued I apologised and ran for the

stairs, nearly falling down them. I stumbled to the telephone and called a cab. When I went outside the sunshine was blinding and so was my head.

Gratefully I sagged through my front door and asked the maid to run me a full hot tub, then make me some black tea with lemon. She was a nice person and we got along fine, but looking at me, still in evening clothes, undoubtably smelling like a gin mill, I really couldn't blame her for sniffing disapprovingly and mumbling,

"They's folks who doesn't know when they's well off, nor how to hold they's liquor."

"Just get the bath and tea - you can bawl me out later." I dragged upstairs, stripped and soaked in a tub for half an hour before putting on a cool night dress and falling into bed, threatening the maid with torture if she woke me on any account - and became instantly unconscious.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

On Sunday night the phone ran hot - Bea called to ask why I hadn't woken her as she had plans for us to go out. Rather testily I asked her if she had the constitution of a galley slave. She retorted that I should ring her when fully recovered and promptly hung up in my ear. Why do people do that when one is "hung"? ugh! Clara called and was even more irate.

"Where the hell have you been? I've been calling you for two days." I muttered that I had attended a social function the night before. Clara was biting.

"Yeah. I can just imagine by the way you sound."

I protested that it was a lovely show, even if I didn't remember going to bed - after all a lady had put me there so I was quite safe.

She replied, "Okay Tui, this is it. You're coming to live with daddy and me - it's too lonely for you otherwise. I won't take no for an answer. Can't you come out tonight?" she continued. "I

want you to meet a couple of nice guys – one I met in Texas. Gee, he’s swell!”

“Oh,” I said, comprehension dawning. “You need a partner for one – I get it.” I gulped a little fresh air. It helped a bit.

“I’ll send Herbert for you,” Clara said. “And here’s Daddy. He wants to talk to you.”

Putting the phone down sounded like one of our livelier earthquakes to my sore head and the impression was not helped by dear Bob’s voice either.

“Hello, Bob,” I tried to coo – sounding more like a Fuzzy Knight,

“Like Clara says, where have you been?” he yelled.

I bristled, “None of your goddam business. I’m coming over and I might just tell you then. Meantime, go put yourself in the Chinese Room.”

Bob snorted. He knew my temper and also what I really meant by that. I hung up. Another party? Well why not? I didn’t feel so bad now and my new picture didn’t start until the middle of the week.

Herbert drove into the driveway at Bedford Drive. The place was lit up like Christmas and looked cheerful and warm. Sweet music quietly wafted into the night air. I sighed and realised just how much I missed the place and its occupants when I’d been away for awhile. I began to wonder – should I marry Bob after all? It was true that at times I felt very lost and lonely, but what about love – the Grand Passion? The nearest I’d come to feeling that was with Dick Arlen and he didn’t even know about it. I loved Bob, sure, but in the same way that I loved Clara – as family. I didn’t think beyond that. I loved Clara dearly as a close buddy. There was a kind of bond as I’ve said. She’s gone and I’m only just here, but true buddyship never fades. The aftermath of wars, as do wars themselves, brings buddyship. The young, lonely, poor, neglected and insecure huddle together in their communes longing for peace, understanding and a better way of life. Perhaps I’m just taking things too seriously, I thought.

Peter B. Kyne had thought so and others as well. Well, I'd think on it.

The rear door was flung open and out bounced Clara, who grabbed me and enthusiastically kissed my cheek. She was a dear kid who couldn't stay mad or bear a grudge for long.

"Tui, Buddy Fogleson's inside, I met him in Texas. Gee, he's a swell guy. He plays the uke too, so you'll like each other. But," she added, "you like Arthur don't you? He's here too."

Arthur Lake had made a film based on a newspaper cartoon strip, *Blondie*, which had a dopey character called Bumstead. Arthur was perfect for that role and they made a series from it and then another and another. We had done a little petting on the couch but certainly were not serious about each other.

The living room was cosy and almost peaceful. Bob had had to go out on a business call, for which I was grateful; I was in no mood for ardent suitors.

"Here she is, Buddy, the lousy gadabout," Clara called. "Says she's hobnobbing with lady someone or other - you know, the one whose playing at the El Capitan?"

I flushed, a little angry at having my idol referred to in this way. The man who rose from the couch was of a good height and build, with a nice, kindly face - good looking in a manly way. Taking my outstretched hand, he grinned.

"Hi, Tui. Nice to meet you at last - Clara's sung your praises plenty."

We dropped the handshake and sat. I snorted,

"Oh yeah. I bet she has. We've a few cute names for each other, but not for use in polite society." We all laughed.

"Buddy's in oil," Clara said.

"Not boiled, I hope," I quipped.

"Har, har, har, very funny. Anyway it's made him a millionaire," she said.

"So it has that funny old Indian man who directs traffic (when Ben Turpin isn't doing it) at the corner of Rossmore and Wiltshire," I said. "That two-storey white mansion on the corner

belongs to him and his white wife lives in it, but he won't. He's in his tepee in the backyard, some fun."

"Yes, we know," Clara was sarcastic.

It was true though. The Indian had struck oil. I'm not sure in which state, but it was a rich strike and he fancied living in Hollywood, so he bought a very expensive mansion, but erected a tepee in which to live by himself while his wife occupied the house. All of Hollywood knew about it and we'd drive by just to see him direct the traffic, long plaits, Indian buckskin and all. It was fascinating, but he died not long before I left the States and all hell broke loose. The authorities tried to remove the lady from the mansion, but she wouldn't budge, barricading herself in against all intrusion. They couldn't get her out. I'm not sure if she was legally married to the "chief" as we called him, but I think so. One day it was all over, but I never heard the end of the story. Hollywood had lost yet another of its colorful citizens, unfortunately.

I thought Buddy was a darling. After the German maid came in with the drinks, we all started kidding about, Buddy picked up my uke and very expertly started to play. Soon we were all singing lustily. After awhile, Buddy began to make up a song about Clara and me, singing as he went. It wasn't bad either, but all I can remember of it was,

"Clara Bow and Tui Lorraine,
They are two little girls I can't quite explain...."

He did compose the whole thing and a nice melody, but I don't think Irving Berlin, who was very popular then, would have been too worried. Clara decided we should dance, so on went the Panatope and off we went into the Charleston, black bottom, and the dreamy waltz, *What'll I do*, *Moonlight and Roses* and my beloved *Macheta*. We were happy, young and had all the good things of life, which was just as well for some of us were to pay dearly later.

After we were called to dinner we sat chatting and laughing. Clara had a story to tell about Hedda Hopper.

“I was doing a scene with her and she told me her real name,” Clara was literally jumping out of her chair with barely suppressed mirth... the nearest thing to human perpetual motion I’ve ever seen.

“Come on, we haven’t got all night,” I yapped.

“Elda Furry,” she screamed.

Rudely we all laughed.

“Sounds like elder skunk,” I remarked. They all laughed, but I felt a bit guilty.

“Hedda,” Clara continued, “said she had a radio program in mind and maybe even a newspaper column.”

“Ye Gods, Lolly Parsons’ll get the mafia in. She can’t be serious,” I said.

“I think she is. She’s very chummy with Marion Davies and Hearst.”

“But Lolly’s with Hearst. Parsons is an institution. He wouldn’t drop her for Hedda, pushy though Hedda is.”

We dropped the subject and got on with more interesting things in the Chinese Room. Petting was such an “in” thing in those golden, glorious days... ah me! Buddy Fogleson remained in our group for quite awhile and I for one could have done with a deal more of his company. He didn’t live in Hollywood and his visits were all too rare. Many years later I was far away from the USA and read that Buddy had taken a famous wife, “Mrs Minerva” - if you don’t already know it was the enchanting Greer Garson. There was a picture of them and my heart gave a pang at the old memories it revived. Buddy had grown even more handsome. His white side-burns were really distinguished. I never met Greer Garson as she came to Hollywood after I’d left, but she got a great guy. As for Hedda Hopper we all know she more than made good her intentions; radio, newspaper column, the lot, but not for Hearst, despite their close friendship. She worked for the *Los Angeles Times*, while Louella Parsons reigned supreme at Hearst’s *Examiner*.



Buddy Fogleson and Greer Garson

As Clara's guests departed, Bob arrived home. Clara had asked me to stay for a chat and Bob joined us saying,

“Glad I got here before you left – Clara said she'd get you to wait.”

I glared at Clara, feeling trapped, but she just giggled, fixed us all a highball and we talked, or rather the two Bows did and on the same old subject. I must move in with them quickly. I must confess I'd been giving their offer some thought. Work had been a bit scarce and although I had several parts lined up safely, the times between were a little far apart. Expenses in Hollywood were always high if you lived as expected, but my most pressing worry financially was my mother, Glory. She wrote often, thanked me for what I'd sent, but said she missed me and couldn't I send for them? By them, I supposed she meant herself and my two brothers. Suddenly Clara said she was tired and going to bed. She obviously expected me to move in

immediately. She kissed us both goodnight and bounced off to her room.

The minute she left Bob proposed to me again. I explained I didn't want to marry just yet and that anyway I had to work harder somehow to get enough money to send for my mother and brothers. This was playing right into Bob's hands. He said if I promised to marry him, he'd do everything possible to help - fares, housing and anything else I couldn't manage. I was speechless - I hadn't dreamed of this. I knew he meant it and would do it. It was getting late and I wanted to go to bed so I promised I'd think it all out and call him the next night with an answer. He kissed me goodnight and I roared out of the driveway, making for the lights of Hollywood.

When I arrived home the maid was in bed but my mail and several telephone messages were on the table. Bea Lillie had called and also the producer of the picture I was to have started in the middle of the week, saying the start had been postponed until the following week, due to a holdup in the script. I was a little disappointed as I was anxious to start work. I looked at the three or four letters from Glory and my heart sank. I loved to hear from her of course, but there was a sameness about her letters which depressed me.... Queensland Harry was more cruel, drinking continuously, more beatings, lack of money.... I sat and opened them. It was just as before.

I knew I wouldn't sleep, so decided to think out my affairs right there and then. Since Lew Penn's tragic death I had been out with several nice boyfriends, but was too busy to be serious about love. Outside of my feelings for Dick Arlen, nobody had interested me much, then I thought of Bob's persistence, his real interest in my welfare. He knew I was not in love with him - I'd made that clear to both him and Clara. Of course he said that didn't matter - don't most older men say the same to younger women? But the pressure seemed to be crowding in on me. If I married Bob, eventually, I thought, the load would become lighter.

After reading Glory's letters again I really came to a decision. I would move in with Clara and Bob and see how it went and although Bob was no knight in shining armour, he thought he was and was kind and generous with what he had. I guessed I could do worse. Drowsy now, I undressed hurriedly, fell into bed and slept.

I dreamed that Louis B. Mayer sacked Garbo on the spot and came galloping down on a white charger, dressed in polished armour (doubtless designed by Adrian) gathered me up in his arms, the horse plunging up the starry highway to the Castle San Simeon atop; except that as we drew near the castle became the formidable front gates of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios with "Leo" staring down on us with baleful eyes. The cheering crowds turned into the clanging of the telephone bell and a rude awakening.

I listlessly reached for the phone. I really would have to get some early nights, I thought, sighing, but there wasn't much chance of that. Clara's bubbling voice danced through the wires,

"Well, made up your mind yet?"

To both our surprise I let out an exasperated, "Yes, I'll move in this week." I added lamely, "My starting date for Van has been put back a week and for once I'm glad there's not such a rush."

"Great," said the *It* kid. "See ya tonight."

"Hold it," I screamed. "Nuts, I'm going to bed early. I'll pack tomorrow."

"What, and miss Joan's party? She's having that whispering crooner over to sing for us. You gotta come."

I'd forgotten Joan Crawford's kind invitation and I was interested.

"Okay, I'll be there, but the rest of the week goes into moving and you can help, get it?"

Clara laughed good-naturedly and said, "Got it."

I rudely suggested she wasn't the only one in the world with "it".

Clara giggled and said she sure as hell was trying to be and we hung up. I'd no sooner flopped back on the pillows when the phone rang again.

"Hello," said a precise English voice, "Is that Miss Lorraine?"

"Bea, I'm sorry, I meant to call you but I've been sort of held up."

"Oh, I do hope not," said the elegant Miss Lillie, "But when are you coming over?"

I explained about the impending move and party, saying I'd be over as soon as I was settled.

"Rot, I want you to come over to MGM with mother, Bobby and me next Wednesday. We'll expect you for lunch and will you please drive us?"

I agreed, hung up, took the receiver off the hook and sank back into my airy fairy dreams.

Joan's party was a swinger - a happy group of people - the crooner was good and generous with his vocal talent. We were mad about contemporary music and Joan was no exception. I don't know why I felt shy with Joan, but I always did, although I liked her very much. She was extremely busy, MGM sure kept her that way, but loving it, doing four or five parts a year, which was good experience. When I think of the energy we had it astounds me. Why doesn't it last? Ah me! Douglas Fairbanks jr. was there and Joan whispered that they were to be married soon, but were getting opposition from "Pickfair".²⁰ Everyone knows what happened, Joan's visit to "Pickfair" was a disaster and she left in tears, but they were married nevertheless, for awhile anyway.

Joan's house was very crowded and we enjoyed ourselves, but the party broke up early for a Beverly Hills affair, as many had early calls at the various studios. I was grateful to leave early, thinking I'd need a rest before moving out to Clara's.

Next morning I gave the maid a week's notice and put her to work packing. The phone rang about midday; it was Eddie Goulding,

“Hi, Eddie, hope you’ve called to give me a starring role, but not today, I’m too busy. What’s new?”

“Er well, nothing really.” Another charming English voice; Hollywood was full of them. “I just thought you might like to go to a matinee. I have to tell you I’ve been turned down twice, so please don’t make it thrice.”

Immediately I became suspicious. Knowing Edmund well, caution became automatic.

“What matinee, Eddie? I’ve seen all the good shows playing and go regularly once or twice a week to Charlot’s Revue, so like I said, what’s new?”

“Well,” he explained somewhat diffidently, “I don’t really mean that sort of matinee. I thought you must be ready to have a little adventure by now, so will you come to Madame Francis’ with me? Just to watch, I mean.”

I nearly dropped the phone.

“You’re drunk, I hope,” I squeaked.

“No, dear, just thought I’d ask. See you at Ruth Chatterton’s on Thursday night. She’s rented Basil Rathbone’s place you know.”

“Yes, I do know and I’ll see you there. You just behave yourself, Eddie Goulding, or I’ll tell your mother.”

“She wouldn’t mind, love, she’d probably ask me to introduce her. You know how she loves people,” he laughed.

I gasped and croaked, “Goodbye, you sonofabitch!”²¹

Eddie laughed again and hung up. He was always full of life and fun, I never knew anyone so fascinated by all things sexual; moreover he treated it all with the calmness of an explorer and couldn’t understand why everyone else wasn’t the same.

Madame Francis made a fortune with her long-running high class whorehouse. Certainly more Hollywood people patronised it than would ever have admitted to it. Eddie was the only one who ever admitted to me that he went there, but I heard of many big name people being regular customers. It was very discreet

and well run, so discreet that to this day I don't know where it was, small as Hollywood was.

I loved Eddie and his family. We were good friends, but he sure was a trier – a loveable one. I had my share of triers, perhaps more than my share, but I was a young and pretty little thing and Hollywood has always been Hollywood. Although I didn't always escape unscathed, I was remarkably lucky. Looking back, I think perhaps Eddie did have the right idea – perhaps one should make of life a great adventure, even the sexual side. He seemed to enjoy life to the full. If his “shade” should be watching me write this he will be smiling happily and thinking,

“Ah! There's hope for her yet. She might even become a dirty old lady, given the time and opportunity.”

Eddie didn't spend all his time on sexual exploits, though. He found time to be among the top directors of good films and a splendid, many-faceted artist.

At Joan Crawford's party Clara had told me she'd bought a cottage at Malibu Beach, a new settlement a bit further up the coast from Santa Monica which was growing fast. The northern beaches were sparsely settled then, compared to these on the south side. Clara told me it was a big house and she intended we should spend as much time there as possible. She had high hopes for some fun times with weekend guests, as it was equipped with a big rumpus room and every type of sporting equipment, including music. I had told her I would move into her Beverly Hills house by the weekend. She gave me the key and said,

“Swell. The sooner the better.”

On Wednesday Bob loaned me a Cleveland Tourer to take Bea, Lucie and Bobbie out to MGM. I decided on this car as I wanted the family to see the countryside with the top down and also it would mean they could get the full benefit of the fresh air and sunshine. It was a good few miles to Culver City, so after an early lunch we set forth with Lucie and Bobbie in the back seat and Bea next to me in the front. I cut through Hollywood, Sunset

and Santa Monica Boulevards until we reached La Cienega, which was a short cut through to Washington Boulevard, on to Culver Boulevard, bringing us right to the immense and imposing studio.

Bea explained the reason for the trip, saying she had been approached by MGM to make a comedy. She was due to meet the hierarchy, particularly L.B. Mayer, to talk the business over and to meet a few friends. I said that was fine by me as I had a few friends there too and would drum up a little business while I was there. Here and there as we drove a friend hooted their car horn and yelled a "hello". We honked right back.

Bea told me she thought the Charlot's Revue, after an incredible run, was ever so slightly beginning to slow down and while she was comfortably domiciled on the West Coast, she might as well do a flick. The family was enjoying the place, the weather and the people enormously and as Christmas, 1926, was drawing near it would be a treat to have Christmas without snow if all went well.

We went through Culver City and I turned off the main highway into a short side street which brought us to the crowded side entrance of the studio. I knew it well, but suddenly horror flowed through me - I turned the steering wheel madly, but it didn't respond. The steering had snapped, leaving me helpless. I jumped on the brake, but not before the car had sideswiped several autos parked on both sides of the narrow lane. We had batted along at a good safe, or so I thought, thirty-five miles an hour (a joke by today's standard) on the busy highways and had the steering gone then the consequences could have been disastrous. Finally the car stopped. The damage, thank heavens, was fairly light, but not the damage to my nerves, nor I think, to Bea's. It happened so quickly I don't think Lucie or Bobbie had time to realise the danger. White-faced, Bea and I looked at each other. I was speechless, but Bea, with her incomparable sense of humour, said,

"I always say there's nothing like a smashing entrance."

And delicately, elegantly, alighted and opened the back door for Bobbie and Lucie. Weakly I followed and we entered the studio. An executive met us. I was still stunned but we explained what had happened and the executive said of course a studio car would take us home when we were ready. I left to look for a telephone and luckily I got onto Bob straight away. I blew the hell out of him, telling him to collect his pile of junk, take care of the smashed cars and just what he could do with all of it, including himself. Ever one to use a bit of bad language to get rid of nerves or bad temper, I felt much better, but often I remember the day I nearly wiped out three generations of Lillies or Peels and one Tui Lorraine.

Bea moved off with her entourage and I made straight for my beloved Woody Van Dyke's office. He was not yet the great director he later became, but was always kept busy. We had a chat in his office, went to the commissary for a cup of coffee, made a date to go to a party with the lady piano player, Violet, or the Lavender Lady, then he departed. I saw the fragile looking, lovely Lillian Gish at a distance and waved hullo. John Gilbert was dashing madly about the corridors. He and Lillian were making *La Boheme* about this time. John had made a big hit with *The Big Parade* about a year before and he knew it, I had watched a few scenes being filmed as I knew Carl Dane, who also made a hit in *Parade* as a comic character. Carl had an early death in 1934. I also saw the tall, rather plump Greta Garbo striding broodingly about, but she sure was slimming down from the last time I'd seen her. Rumour had it that L.B. had great hopes for her to unseat Pola of Paramount and any other Vamp lady past or present.

Mayer was astute and how right he was. Garbo intrigues us still after fifty years. What is that woman's magic? While I was there I got a small, but telling, part in a picture with Pauline Starke, to be directed by Lionel Barrymore. The working title was *Diamond Handcuffs*, but heaven knows what it was released as. I've never seen or heard of it since, nor of Miss Starke, but

there was always plenty heard and said about the fabulous Barrymores, for and against, but never dull.

When I first arrived in Hollywood a great number of actors and actresses at MGM and Universal were on their way up and a number were more or less static. This was possibly due mainly to the beginning of the changeover to talkies. Two ladies popular then were heard of little in following years - Rosemary Theby, a lady with a fine sense of humour, who had played in many silents and Blanche Sweet, who was lovely to look at and very well known, although I don't remember her work. It is amazing to remember how prolific silent picture makers were, compared to the later talkie makers. It is regrettable that so many fine artists are forgotten.



Blanche Sweet

Rosemary Theby

Hurrying now to meet Bea and company, I rushed to the office in which they were to be waiting. My headlong progress ended abruptly at the doorway - Bea was there alright, but so was a beautiful blonde lady I recognised immediately. Only a

week or so before, I had watched, spellbound as she hypnotised the audience with her interpretation of Sadie Thompson in the stage play, *Rain*. She WAS Sadie Thompson, never to be topped in the role; she was the agonisingly beautiful, talented, too everything, Jeanne Eagels.

Bea shot an amused glance at my open mouth and introduced us. I started an enthusiastic greeting, but never delivered it. Miss Eagels looked coldly at me, muttered something that sounded like,

“Oh, hell!” and went on with her conversation with Bea.

Miss Lillie’s impeccable manners, good humour and fondness for me couldn’t condone this behaviour, so she interrupted to tell me briefly that the film part was all set and she was just waiting to see Sam Taylor, who was to direct. If I’d like to join Lucie and Robbie downstairs in the studio car she would join us soon. Jeanne Eagels looked at me and I thought she was about to speak, but, still smarting from the snub, I nodded coldly in her direction and was gone. She had lost a friend in those few moments, but not a sincere admirer of her work. I was to meet her just once more, at the Beverly Hills Hotel with her husband and Bea. Three years later Jeanne Eagels was tragically dead and thereby hangs another peculiar tale, which I will relate in its turn. I will add, though, that our second meeting did not improve our relationship, which makes what happened after her death so very strange and difficult for me to understand.

I was in the middle of telling Lucie about Jeanne Egel’s strange behaviour when Bea arrived. She explained that she thought Jeanne didn’t like women much, especially if they were pretty. I blushed at the compliment, but still found the whole incident hard to understand. I was tired and still shaken from the car accident, so asked to be dropped straight home. The Lillies understood as they always did, the darlings, and seemed to have forgotten the car incident altogether, which was so like them.

Clara was home and Coop’s long lean figure unfurled itself from the couch as I entered – he always had nice manners. Bob

was home too, giving orders in the kitchen. He asked if we could have a private chat, so we went outdoors to a swing on the lawn. He was chewing his usual cigar, but seemed quiet and subdued. Taking my hand and holding it warmly, he said he'd been very busy with his business affairs. He owned a dry cleaning business which he said did well and also hinted at other interests which were equally successful. Actually I never did know much about his business affairs as he seldom mentioned them and I never had any sort of business head. This chat quite took me by surprise. He said he knew I'd marry him and that being so, we could send money for my mother and brothers to come to California. He kissed me and said,

"There's no hurry for us to marry unless you want to right away."

I was puzzled and worried. This wasn't how it should be - I should feel excited and happy. I didn't. I felt more forlorn than anything else - grateful, yes, but not in love. Then I thought of the many letters in which Glory begged me to send for them. I also knew that to pay for this mammoth move without help would be beyond my power for, perhaps, years and maybe never.

I turned to Bob, kissed him lightly on the cheek and said I'd marry him later for sure, but just wanted to live with him and Clara for awhile to see how we'd all get along. This suited Bob, so I wrote a long letter to Glory that night, telling her to wind up her business, obtain passports, then let me know and I'd send the money. It would all take a few months, taking us well into 1927, but mailing the letter gave me a sense of relief and happiness at the thought of seeing dear Glory again.

That night at dinner Bob smiled at me before turning to Clara, telling her not to be at all surprised if she had a stepmother one of these days. There were just the three of us; Gary had left early. Clara said she hoped so and I know she meant it. They laughed and I joined in, although I felt quite silly and, I guess, looked it. So few of the young have wisdom. Today many think

they do, but the state of the world tends to disprove this, not that the young are to blame. Any observer knows where the blame lies.

After dinner we sat, listening to music. Clara said she had invited several people to the Malibu house for the following weekend, that they were a jolly crew and we should have a good time. The doorbell rang and Clara answered it herself, saying.

“Oh, hello Paul. Come in and meet the folk.”

She introduced an insignificant looking shortish man, bordering on middle age, named Paul Bern (Levy). He handed Clara a large bouquet of flowers and then sat down close to her. It seemed he was a film script writer, but I'd not heard of him before. Bob asked me to join him in his quarters. I got the message, so, after excusing ourselves we went, Bern barely glanced our way as we left. I was to hear a lot more about Mr Bern later, especially six years hence, but I didn't like him then or later and my opinion of him has not changed half a century later. I've heard and read the sob stories published about him by his fellow workers and bosses, most of them the same type of people as he was. I have also seen two films, allegedly based on Jean Harlow's life, which I consider little but lying smut. I worked briefly with Jean much later and don't ever remember working with a more considerate and less affected actress, nor did I ever see or hear anything to bear them out.

Later that night Clara gave me the answer to a lot of things which were to happen in the future, when I asked her if Paul Bern was her latest crush.

“Hell, no, but he's so persistent and attentive,” she laughed. “I don't think he'll be back much after tonight.”

And thank goodness he wasn't except for once or twice. Clara said he just liked to be seen in public with the most beautiful and popular stars of the day, a fact born out as time went by. In the end it cost him his life, a price he seemed prepared to pay.²²

On Thursday night we had a grand time at Basil and Ouida Rathbone's house. As promised Eddie Goulding was there, but

Woody Van Dyke got caught up with studio business and couldn't make it. Ruth Chatterton was also there and wanted to rent the house again as the Rathbones were going East before, perhaps a trip to Europe. Ruth was working in Michael Arlen's *The Green Hat* on the stage. I had seen it and cried along with all the other females in the audience. I loved her work – she was a cool cat, born for the stage. She flew her own plane and seemed totally aloof and unattainable. Later I realised it was all part of the romantic publicity plan and it worked very well, too. We met many times, often with Bea Lillie, but Ruth always looked vague and had to be introduced all over again. We both survived, however. Later Ruth left the stage and pictures, although she didn't do many pictures, to become a successful writer, but what acting she did do was fascinating.

During the mid and later twenties I saw so many wonderful plays it is hard to remember the exact dates. One was the splendid Pauline Frederick in *Madame X*. I later met and liked her, but I was astonished to find that before she died in 1938, she was playing just a few bit parts. How many big stars ended that way. Miss Frederick was also the original *Bella Donna*, before I went to America.



Pauline Frederick



Ruth Chatterton

Many of the stage elite were in Hollywood at this time and we often met at parties. There were several at darling Basil and his adoring little round Ouida's place. They were great hosts and the party was fun, with games and chatter to keep everyone amused.

Vaudeville was still flourishing and all of the biggest names in showbusiness passed through the Orpheum, RKO circuit at least once, however radio was taking on more and more importance, so players who had once stuck to vaudeville and the screen were now starting new careers with their own radio shows. Millions of people listened to radio day and night, so popular radio stations could afford big salaries. Networks were being formed, also, so this made the work even more valuable.



Texas Guinan

At the Rathbones' party were one or two from past Orpheum programs. One was the legendary Texas Guinan. Texas was by no means young - she had played in silents in the pre and early twenties, outdoor and western films mostly, hence the Texas. She had been a very pretty girl and was now an extremely good-

looking woman. We conversed at length that night and Texas told me she had come to Hollywood from her present business back East to discuss some business with a studio and also to visit some old friends.

She suggested I go East, that I'd do well in New York and she would help me. Regretfully I refused her offer - I turned down many chances for shows on Broadway and in plush clubs, another name for "speakeasies". I was afraid to mix with

gangsters because of the possible end results and, besides, I couldn't leave the movies.

Texas and I exchanged addresses just in case I changed my mind and I'm happy to say we did meet again, getting to know each other quite well. The business Texas had left back East was quite amazing and amusing and all due to the infamous Volstead Act which was in force from January 1920. Here's a little history for those not familiar with the beginnings of the infamous prohibition period which still costs the USA dearly.

As booze was driven underground many unsavoury people began using all their ingenuity to procure and sell liquor - bringing it from Canada, Cuba, from sea-going ships and building stills to make their own when all else failed. They bought old warehouses, turned them into breweries and made enough beer to supply all who wanted to pay for it.

This, of course, was the beginning of the gangster era, not to be confused with the "public enemy" period which began much later and for different reasons. In the West we were fortunate not to be bothered by gangsterism during prohibition, but they did come later. During this earlier period the gangsters preferred the East where there were many more people and therefore a bigger demand, easier access to the liquor and it was easier to hide.

Most people had been angered by the way the bill had been introduced while so many of the American soldiers had still been overseas for World War One and this was the reason given for the average American's contempt for the law and his flouting of it by getting a supply any way he could and drinking it, often in public. A new word was coined in this era - "speakeasy" - and this is where the Texas tale begins.

Texas' picture-making by now was almost nil and other theatrical work scarce, so Texas decided to open a "speak" with a difference, right on Broadway. I regret to say I was never in it, but I have first hand information from the lady herself and from friends and I'm sure it was a wow! The costs were enormous -

pay-offs, overheads and salaries. Texas had decided on a very plush environment, a good floor-show, featuring a big name attraction. She also had a small line of “ponies” (a dancing chorus, slightly different to show girls, who were very tall and paraded in beautiful costumes).

Her place was an instant success, people rushed it looking for work and patrons booked ahead for weeks. Big stars of the day could always be seen there. Texas told me Al Jolson was a good friend and customer. She smiled fondly, saying there was a sweet and talented kid in the line-up, Ruby Keeler, and she was sure Al was smitten with her. Most will know that some time later Al did marry Ruby, but Al, like so many of us, was already married - to showbusiness. The mixture seldom brings lasting happiness.

Texas became more famous through her nightclub than she'd ever been in films, mostly because of just two words. As her patrons were ushered in, Texas would smile widely and bellow a lusty,

“Hello, sucker!”

After this greeting who could question his or her account? Very few, if any, ever became bellicose about it and forever after during prohibition those words became synonymous with this grand, warm hearted woman. Although I didn't know her well, I liked her a lot.

The party was breaking up so I said goodnight to James Hall and the Bancrofts, George and his wife. Both Jimmy and George were working at Paramount at this time, so I saw them frequently at the studio. George had a home on the beach at Santa Monica and often invited Clara, which always meant me too, for weekends. I remember Merna Kennedy was often at the Bancrofts' on those weekends. She was Charlie Chaplin's leading lady in *The Circus*, being filmed at the time.

Bob was waiting up when I got home. Telling him not to bother was useless - both Clara and I were his chickens and he often behaved like the broodiest of hens. We knew he waited up to see if we brought anybody with us and sometimes he was not

disappointed – we brought a party home and continued on into the night. Clara had an early call, so was asleep. I hadn't had much liquor at the Rathbone's. There was plenty, of course, but I was alone and driving. I had neatly sidestepped my wouldbe tutor, Eddie Goulding, who was still telling me I should have more adventures than he thought I was. I slipped out while Eddie was relating the same piece of advice to another innocent victim. Frankly Eddie, darling, I didn't miss anything I wanted, few of us did.



James Hall



George Bancroft

Bob was too pleased to see me home to sulk and told me everything was ready for my folks' arrival. I had sent three thousand American dollars for fares and expenses and Glory had cabled her thanks, saying they were ready to leave on the first available ship, but not steerage, believe me, as I had done. I had paid a deposit on a cottage at Santa Monica, paying off the balance as rental. I thought being near the sea would make Glory happy, but how wrong I was about Glory, just about all my life!

Now I wanted to sleep, I was really tired, so Bob kissed me a fond goodnight. I'd no sooner sunk into blissful slumber than a recurring dream began. This dream recurred off and on, for many years - I was flying, not in an aeroplane, but just soaring by myself above trees, housetops, meadows and country roads. I think I understand that dream now. It was the inner wish for freedom, to belong to myself alone. I never have felt entirely free and I don't think I ever shall, but it doesn't really matter now and probably that is why I haven't had the dream since growing old.

Next morning I phoned Mr Van Pelt, the producer to whom I was contracted for several parts. He was a nice guy and one of the best directors on "poverty row". He told me my "call" was for Tuesday morning which suited me fine, so I called Bea Lillie, who said,

"How about coming up? We'll go over to the Cathay Circle for the matinee of John's film."

I hesitated, mainly because I didn't like John Gilbert, whom I'd met at MGM and then again when Beatrice had dragged me along as a slightly immature duenna for a lunch date with him. He later invited Clara to lunch alone and again I was dragged along, more for company this time than duenna services. When he saw me with Clara, he made a nasty and sarcastic remark about Bea, whereupon my ever volatile temper took over - I slapped his face and told Clara I wouldn't stay. She could have Herbert drive me to the Boulevard and return for her. Clara was surprised, but said that was okay, turned on the record player and began dancing to the jazz record. I fled. Guess I really couldn't blame the guy. Thinking back I must have seemed a "thorn in his side".

Bea was still waiting for my answer, so I said I thought *Bardelys the Magnificent* would be pretty boring.

"I don't mind," she said. "I'm already bored."

"Okay," I replied, "I'll be right up."

From my point of view the afternoon was a disaster – from Bea’s, a side-splitting comedy of intended errors, ending her boredom and offering a chance to practise her split-second timing, both at John Gilbert’s and my embarrassed expense.

Lucie and Bobbie were sunning themselves when I arrived and Bobbie ran over to show me his latest small turtle – he was fascinated by those turtles. I gave Lucie a hug. She said Bea was nearly ready and for me to be sure to stay for dinner. Bea, beautifully groomed as usual, looking cool and casual, descended the stairs, greeting me as we left the house.

Beside my car stood a large Cadillac coupe and Bea said since she’d been making a film for MGM and therefore was staying in California indefinitely, she’d rented a car and learned to drive.

“When?” I asked suspiciously.

“When what?” She asked the question innocently.

I became even more alert.

“You know very well what,” I retorted.

“Are you accusing me of stealing an automobile?” Bea answered tartly, giving me her famous oblique look.

“As to that I wouldn’t know,” I replied. “You can be forgetful at times.”

Of course she wasn’t forgetful and I knew she hadn’t stolen the car. It was just a sample of the game-playing conversations fashionable in the twenties – brittle, cute, very Noël Cowardish and considered witty and very avant-garde.

“Alright Bea. You’ve had your fun. When did you learn to drive? And anyway we can go in my car.”

“Nothing doing. The car dealer showed me how and I’ve been practising all week.”

She steered me to the coupe and we both got in. I felt myself pale as I thought of the hill and narrow road we had to descend. My clever friend started the car, which was in gear, so naturally it jerked forward. By now I was not only green, but shaking.

“Don’t be silly, Tui. You know there’s nothing to this driving thing.”

All I could think was, Oh, good Lord, please do the driving! With a screech of tyres, handbrake still on, Bea managed to point the car in the right direction. I tentatively mentioned the handbrake, in a slightly squeaky voice.

“Oh, is that what it is. A handbrake! How clever of them. I didn’t know,” Bea cooed.

I was already paralysed and speechless, so couldn’t scream even if we’d flown over the edge. We didn’t, but made a fast, erratic descent, scraping the side of the hill from time to time, as though we were fleeing for our lives, I mean life, I already felt as good as dead.

When we reached the bottom, Bea pulled up, looking slightly flushed, an unheard-of condition for her. Whether it was from triumph or surprise at having made it, I’ve never known.

My relief was short lived. We started off again, tyres screeching a protest at such treatment. I shuddered as I thought of all the main boulevards we had to cross and gave a prayer of thanks for the light stops, not that they made any difference when they presented themselves to Bea. The Cathay Circle was about five miles away and I wished I’d walked it. I was to wish I’d never come at all when we eventually arrived, not before picking up some slivers of wood from an overhanging bridge, stupidly placed in the path of Miss Lillie, and with wood supports yet! I don’t suppose concrete would have fared any better.

When we did arrive, Bea had to help me from the car. Her every hair was in place and her face shining with pixie good humour - I was dragged out, looking like I’d been through a meat grinder. Suddenly I froze again - there was a queue and I could see those pixie eyes already dancing with mischievous cunning. Staggering a little, but with a sigh of resignation, I followed Bea with a feeling of impending doom. Of course it all happened as I knew it would the minute I saw the queue which, I must add, it was entirely unnecessary that we join. All Bea

needed to do was see the manager and we'd have been ushered to the best seats with great pomp and ceremony, but not dear Bea. That would have been too repetitious and no fun at all.

As she began my face changed from green to red and I pulled what clothing I could around it, trying, unsuccessfully, to hide. In her best British voice, she declaimed,

“Why must they make people stand in line, like lambs waiting to be slaughtered?”

“Shut up,” I muttered.

“What did you say?” my ex-friend (for the moment) glared at me.

“I said be quiet and I'll buy the tickets.”

“Indeed you won't,” continued the exasperating Bea, “I asked you out. What do you think I am?”

I declined to answer that for the moment, but did venture to remark that Hallowe'en was over, so why the trick or treat bit?

“Witty, witty, you should be on the stage.”

She was having a ball and I felt like a football, vowing inwardly never to go out with her again, not alone anyway. This vow her friends constantly made and just as constantly broke. I do understand why. It was such fun to think over, later.

Now we were at the box office window and there followed a harangue which would have done credit to Shylock had he stooped to it.

“What,” enquired my (now for sure) ex-friend, “are these extra cents tacked onto the entrance fee for?”

I felt like adding, “fo, fum, I smell the blood of an English woman” for at the moment I did, almost! The queue was growing behind us – the people staring as if hypnotised. Even for Hollywood these were “goings on”. The aggrieved ticket seller said she thought the extra few cents were sales tax and would we please pay up or go, we were obstructing business.

Bea borrowed the “extra few cents” from me, further obstructing the business as I fumbled in my bag for the money. She declared loudly that Royalty didn't carry anything as lowly as

mere money anyway and she was already sorry she had come just to see John Gilbert, whom she could see in the flesh anytime she wanted to. The natives, getting over the initial shock of the proceedings, were also getting restive.

We moved to the entrance and I breathed a premature sigh of relief, praying that nobody had recognised either of us. I most certainly would not have. Before the sigh was even finished I tensed again.

“Tickets please,” said the girl at the door. Bea glared at her, “Don’t be absurd! Why should I give you my tickets? I just bought and paid for them, didn’t I Tui? You saw me.”

I nodded weakly, feeling myself going at the knees. I couldn’t see a taxi anywhere. I was brought back with a thump in the ribs.

“Oh, give the silly girl the tickets Tui.”

I shuddered every time I heard my unusual given name bandied around in such a loud tone.

“She probably needs them more than we do anyway.”

I hadn’t realised until then that I had the tickets in my hand. Hastily I shoved them at the girl, who took them gingerly as if they may be contaminated. I followed Bea up the stairs. She was muttering loudly that she had never been so insulted in all her life and would probably never again darken the doors of the Cathay Circle Theatre. I’d be willing to bet they said “Amen” and hoped she meant it.

I wouldn’t have thought it possible but worse was to come. We were left to our own devices to find seats, so Bea decided we wanted to sit over near a wall. The feature had started, so the other patrons were not a bit amused at the scuffling and pushing past seated customers when vacant seats were available near the aisle. They were even less amused by Bea’s loud complaints,

“How dare they start the main feature before we got here? And why are the bloody seats so close together. I think it’s positively immoral, don’t you Tui?”

I cringed at hearing my name again and so loudly too, croaked and pointed at my throat.

“Oh, cat’s got your tongue,” she quipped.

I muttered that another cat would get my boot when we got out and glared at her darkly. The noise could be heard all over the theatre – patrons were shushing and threatening to push us out. Finally, Bea decided on two seats, but just then, a man we thought was an usher sauntered up and told us to quieten down or get out.

“How dare you, my good man, I’ll call the manager,” trumpeted Bea.

Her “good man” turned back and said he **WAS** the manager and if he’d been on the door he wouldn’t have allowed us in. Bea snorted and told him to “go home to mother”. I had just subsided in my seat, closed my eyes and ventured the silent hope that I could doze through what was left of the show, when, with a whacking nudge of elbow to my ribs again, everything flew open, eyes, mouth and handbag.

“Look Tui, look at old John!” she was pointing at the screen and using her best stage voice which, believe me, was considerable,

“Look at that silly wig. He’s making a damn fool of himself! I can’t understand it. Really he should know better!”

The patrons now were really getting in a nasty mood and so was I. I rose, fell over the legs of the person next to me and yelled at Bea,

“I’m going home if I have to walk. You can get back the best way you can!”

I was at the aisle now, nearly running to the stairs and I noticed Bea was close on my heels. I saw the manager looming towards us and flew down the stairs with my usually unruffled friend panting and passing me on the way – her legs were longer than mine: everybody’s legs are longer than mine.

Bea was waiting for me at the car, a placating grin on her elfin face,

“Enjoy yourself?” she asked.

Twin daggers flew from my eyes in her direction,

“I’d kill you here and now if I had the strength,” I panted.

“Who’d drive you then?” She asked wickedly.

“Oh, Gawd,” I groaned. “Not that again. I can do without dinner, I’ll thumb a ride.”

“You can’t. I’ve promised Jack Pickford we’d drop by.”

“You’ve won me, you beast.”

She knew I was very fond of Jack. In fact his sense of humour was not so different from her own. Jack, who was Mary Pickford’s younger brother, was a splendid actor and would have made a big name for himself if he had lived longer. He was to be Bea’s leading man in her film debut at MGM. Bea said she hadn’t bothered to tell Lucie of her plans. She was used to Bea not turning up when expected and wouldn’t worry. It seemed Lucie liked to “be in on everything” and Bea enjoyed thwarting her in this. Thus ended one of the funniest, in retrospect, days of my life.

Without the magic of Beatrice Lillie’s genius and personality it cannot be done credit on paper, but I still get a belly laugh out of writing and remembering it.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Clara’s Malibu house was beautiful, situated right on the sand, rising high at the front. The front wall was all glass with a superb and unobstructed view of my beloved Pacific Ocean, giving almost the effect of being aboard a ship. The rumpus room was at ground level and really was equipped with all kinds of sporting and health equipment as well as a swell bar with plenty of the necessary to stock it.

Many friends from the studio dropped in for the Sunday swimming and festivities – the Bancrofts, Vicky McLaglen, the old darling, certainly one of my favorites and Jack Oakie, who made a name for himself in Clara’s picture, *The Fleet’s In*. He was a happy go lucky fellow and now, white of hair and well “padded” he is still going strong. He always was astute where a

buck was concerned for all of his good humour. In later years Jack and Eugene Pallette, and their dearly remembered friend, became great buddies and I often saw them together on the boulevards. Tom Mix's elder daughter, Ruth, often stayed with us. She was a dear person, but needed more of Tom's love than he had to give her.



Eugene Pallette



Ruth Mix



Victor McLaglen



Jack Oakie

Richard Dix was a good friend, a helluva nice guy, who also loved the sea and had a house further down the coast. We often got together for a drink and a chat. On one occasion he was in a talkative mood and we spent quite some time philosophising about life, success, failure and the importance of money. Like many young people I felt then that money was not as important as I now know it to be, although even now I still place less importance on it than most people I know, but that day Richard said something which came as quite a shock. It just didn't seem to add up to his generous lifestyle. He said,

“Tui, this is the truth. money is my God and I'm seeing to it that I have plenty of it by. Without it you're nothing!”



Richard Dix



Bela Lugosi

I disagreed with him violently on the matter, we were good friends and could remain so despite such arguments, but today I'd be inclined to argue with him. Richard was a very important star, particularly in the silents. His rugged good looks suited the silent hero well. He was not a womaniser to my knowledge - we were close friends, nothing more, but I was sad that he died at

the relatively young age of fifty-five – I’d have liked to see him live longer to enjoy his god.

We had one weird, wonderful and completely memorable houseguest on at least one weekend – a notorious character known as Count Dracula, the original “Count” Bela Lugosi. A Hungarian, he had played the part on most of the stages of Europe, making it a huge success and consequently moved on to do the same in America. I saw him on the stage in Los Angeles just before the finish of the play’s run. Naturally movie makers jumped at the chance of a movie with Bela in the role and this was the forerunner to all the ensuing horror stories, some of which are still being made around the “Count’s” character now.

The first night Bela stayed with us we were a little pushed for sleeping quarters and I bunked with Clara while Bela had a room to himself across the passage and a couple of doors along. I’d been asleep but a pinching on my arm and a noise I at first thought was a bad earthquake were slowly bringing me back to full consciousness, Clara, who was doing the pinching, saw I was awake and said,

“Who the hell is making that goddam noise?”

I, listening now, replied,

“It’s someone snoring their bloody head off!”

“Come on,” Clara said, “We’ll have to stop it or nobody will be able to sleep.”

Lights showing under several doors, proved her right. Bela’s door was open and the room in darkness, but all was certainly not quiet. The room was literally jumping with the reverberations of his unearthly snoring. We turned on his light, but he didn’t waken, so we pushed him onto his side. He still didn’t waken, but thankfully the deafening noise did, so we left, closing the door tightly behind us.

He sure got a ribbing next morning and before long all of Hollywood knew that far from spending the night imbibing copious and gory draughts of blood, the sinister Count Dracula just snored, loudly.

This was the forerunner to many happy weekends. Malibu was a welcome hideaway for Clara, who understandably wanted to be alone with her private life occasionally. Suitors were as persistent as ever – Gary was still the main one, but Gilbert Roland, Victor Flamming²³ and a new fellow named Bob Savage were also on the scene. Bob Savage threatened suicide because Clara refused to marry him. The newspapers got hold of the story and, as usual, the publicity value was too much for them and they blew it out of all proportion. It all subsided as these things do, but by then the privacy of the beach house was gone and so, thank goodness, was Savage – another bloody bore.²⁴

The feeling and privacy gone from Malibu, Clara took a flat at the newly opened Garden of Allah. The great Nazimova, whom I'd met so early in my Hollywood days, had converted part of her home into the flats. She had had some set-backs in her acting career, which I thought a great pity, as I thought her magnificent, but many other great silent stars were also beginning to fade, while others were getting the breaks.

Our little hideout at the Garden of Allah didn't last long either. Only Clara and I, in our household, knew of it, but Bob was like a Pinkerton spy and soon caught up with us. So did half of Hollywood's party-goers. Whew!

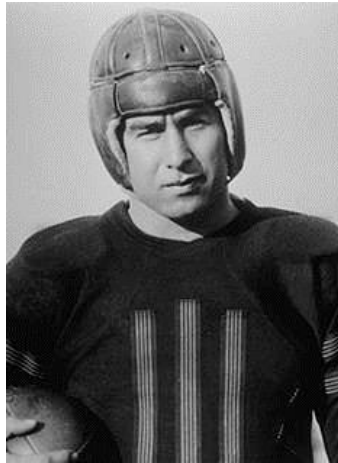
Along with all of our other activities during the winter months, we had also been going to the football games and car races on Saturday afternoons. Joan Crawford came with us a few times before she married. She was a great girl, a good sport and also about the hardest working actress I've ever known. She really deserved her success. (Regrettably since I started writing this book Joan and several others mentioned have passed on, Bing Crosby, Charles Chaplin, Mary Pickford and some other friends. It saddens me, but I guess people just can't live forever. We always had a man or two along on those outings. It's hard to remember who they were, but I do know we had fun, dressed modishly in the current fashions. If you don't remember we were

the flappers of the roaring twenties. Doesn't ring a bell? Well, I'm sorry for you. You sure missed something.

Our particular favourite footballers were on the Universities of California team. Clara had a crush on Morely Drury, an All-American and some time before Bob had found our new hide-out at the Garden of Allah, she invited the whole team to a party there, for night swimming, fun and games. She had called a certain fraternity house, got Morely Drury to the phone and invited the whole team for Saturday night. Morely was thrilled and said although they were not allowed out they had a special window, so Clara promised we'd pick them up in cars, no strain. Jesse Hibbs, who at one time was married to our good friend, Adela Rogers St Johns, was also a star on the team.



Jesse Hibbs



Morely Drury

Clara and I went home for dinner to placate Bob, who was not at all amused when we said we were going out again. We probably said we were going around to Joan's again - we often used her as an alibi. After dinner we took off to pick up our guests. Our other friends were waiting to help transport the great footballers and we went straight to the Garden of Allah, where a

servant had been sent to order the food and drink and make the place ready.

In no time at all the party was hopping in terrific form – the boys were having a “ball” and it was nothing to do with football. A little after midnight everyone was merry, bacchus well and truly had hold of my hand, I was glowing. Clara was learning the finer points of gridiron from first one, then another of the proud All-Americans there. Muscles were being flexed all over the place like yoyos. All we needed to complete the picture was Mae West, as yet unheard of on the screen, but boy oh boy what fun she was having in New York, showing those poor blind mice the true meaning of sex and spending spells in jail for it – all such fun. The citizens and cops of New York enjoyed it all too – the police of Manhattan always seemed to be rugged individualists. They were good chaps in Beverly Hills and Hollywood too in those days. They would rather try to protect us than try to run us in or many more of us would have been able to swap yarns with the indestructible Miss West. If she had been at that party we may have been more disciplined.

I hate to think what one of the other residents of the Garden thought of that party. He was a big name song writer (no not Irving Berlin, unfortunately) named Mario Herb Brown and he certainly didn’t approve of us and showed it. Imagine anyone wanting to lead a quiet life or sleep in Hollywood. We couldn’t understand it.

Back at the party there seemed to be steps everywhere and someone seemed to fall up or down them with unceasing regularity and monotony. Some bright soul suggested a swim and those who were not already “resting it off” rushed for swim suits. We really had to wear them then – the night did have a thousand eyes and we didn’t want to have to bother the already over-worked vice-squad. My, those nice boys were busy, but then, what did you expect? Alice in Wonderland? Besides it depends on what you call vice. I’m sure I can’t teach you anything you don’t already know.

Clara, looking swell in swim togs and several of the boys showing off their muscles, were ready for the plunge. My eyesight was bothering me so I decided to skip the swim and sat in an overstuffed chair, sipping something which tasted vile and brooded a little. It was just as well. Suddenly one of the chaps flew back into the apartment yelling,

“Oh, my God!”

He was pallid, trembling and fortunately, fairly sober, one of very few. We stared stupidly at him.

“I went out on the diving board to be first in,” he explained. “I leaned down to feel how cold the water was, but I couldn’t reach it, so I went round to the steps. I went down a couple, then a few more and I was on the bottom of the pool. The goddam thing’s bone dry, we’d have broken our bloody necks!”

Some ran and others staggered out to look. We all seemed to sober up very quickly. Shock does wonders and I was about to get another, Bob arrived in the middle of it all and put on a helluva turn. I told him I’d return to the North Pole if he didn’t shut up. He said,

“A good thing too.”

Clara suggested we all went home while it was still dark and we all flew in different directions.

Next day Hollywood buzzed with the details of the extra choice wild party, but I’m told the USC football coach was somewhat less than amused. We did have one more football party, though, out at Bedford Drive, but fewer were asked to this one. Joan was there for awhile and of course one thing led to another in the big living room. Clara wanted to be shown by experts how to throw a forward pass. We moved the furniture up against the walls and it was on. The onlookers, including myself, stood on the furniture, almost out of harm’s way. The boys and Clara lined up to show us how – how is right – tackles, forward and lateral passes, even a kick or two.

The din was deafening and the neighbours, not used to such an uproar, called the cops, who arrived in a flurry. Everyone

thought we were being attacked and in one way, of course, they were right. We told the officers what harmless games we were playing. They grinned and said,

“Okay, but hold the noise down. Hey, we sure would like to meet Morely Drury and Jesse Hibbs.”

We did the honours and as it was late, we toned down the noise a little, after all, the boys didn’t play football all the time.²⁵

I think Bob must have been at Madam Frances’ establishment or some lucky lady’s pad – he didn’t stay home much at night. I didn’t know it then, but it later emerged that Bob was very fond of the ladies and not one to sit around and idly chat. When he did arrive home the house was dimly lit and quiet, though that was not necessarily true of the inmates. Thank heavens I’d gone to bed and to sleep. Also fortunately, several people had left and there were just a few couples playing games and telling each other lies in the tradition of Miss Glyn’s *It*. Clara was in her parlour, the Chinese Room, immersed in a fiery intellectual conversation about the villainies the Mexican Government had perpetrated against the heroic Pancho Vila, who had been assassinated not too many years before. It was doubtless some dramatic story she had gleaned when her romance with Gilbert Roland was flowering.

Despite this relative respectability of aspect, Mr Bow took one look at the carnage in the living room, which contained some expensive furniture, and evicted the inhabitants in record time. I didn’t enquire next morning about the outcome of Clara’s and Bob’s little late night chat. I could make a pretty fair assumption from the sulky silence at the breakfast table and anyway my head was giving me enough trouble for me to be glad to avoid hearing the details. Flight in the face of trouble being the better part of valour in my book, I took to the hills and the comparative quiet of Bea Lillie’s house.

Hangovers were not the only result of this party. The newspapers informed us that Mr Jones, the USC coach, had been informed of the antics of his high spirited team (If he had

any doubts I think the poor showing they made the following few days would have done the trick) and he immediately lowered the boom, putting a ban on the boys visiting 512 Bedford Drive, Beverly Hills, or consorting with the inmates. There were only Clara, Bob, the servants and I - Bob, the servants and I were out, so poor Clara had to take the blame and turn to other sports. It didn't bother me any. I never have been keen on those body sports.

It took an interior decorator several days to repair the damage to the living room - expensive fun, but who thinks of that at the time?

I spent a quiet day at the Lillies' and even had a nap after lunch. Towards evening Bea asked,

“How's your hangover?”

I just grimaced, so she went on,

“We'll go to my apartment and have a scotch while mother's having a nap and you can tell me all about the football party.”

I followed with alacrity. Five or six drinks later Bea, having quite sensibly locked the door, was laughing with real enjoyment at our silly antics as I related them. There was a gentle knocking at the door, which had resisted being opened. We ignored it - my hangover was gone and it was all such a giggle. The gentle tapping became a rapping and Lucie's voice came through the door,

“Come on, you two. Dinner is ready.”

“Go away mother dear. We're going to Jack Pickford's for dinner.”

And we did.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Doubtless many would be asking when we took the time to do any work, but believe me we did work, sometimes unmercifully hard. In the early and middle twenties young actresses under contract were pushed into parts in as many as six

pictures a year. As I've mentioned Joan Crawford was one who worked like blazes – in 1925, 27 and 28 she did six leading parts in the year. Other actresses worked just as hard. Clara escaped lightly by comparison. I don't remember her doing more than a couple of flicks in a year. I myself remember one "gig" in which we worked eighteen hours straight to finish up the picture on schedule – I guess it doesn't happen now. At that time there were no guilds or unions, so we, who were not big stars, were worked very hard for relatively little money and even less appreciation.

In those years I worked in anything going. I did doubling, stunting, small parts and even starred in a few roughies. But also I worked in radio, mainly singing and did quite a number of stage plays, which gave me a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction. Somehow when you're young and enjoy what you are doing you seem to find the time – we damn well did anyway. Serials and quickie westerns were tough but fast work and I did many of those as well as two reeler comedies. We worked hard and, as the saying goes, played hard and it was all damn good fun. I feel honoured to have been part of it, because it can never come again and is now history, also at this moment I'm seventy-two years young, which I never thought I'd see.

I slept late the next day, wanting to be rested for work starting in the middle of the week. Clara left word for me to meet her at Paramount for lunch. I couldn't make it for lunch, but went later, meeting with Clara, her leading man, Neil Hamilton and director, Clarence Badger, both swell guys. I have no idea what the picture was called or about, but there were to be some night scenes so we took time to chat and Neil showed me his latest parlour tricks. He was a magic "nut", just loved it, and was always looking for new legerdemain tricks – he was pretty good at them too and very good looking. Studio gossip was that he had been a model for Arrow Collars and with those looks it was easy to believe. I see him even now sometimes, as he did a continuing role in the Batman series, but I haven't heard of dear old Santa Claus (our pet name for Clarence) for years.

Clara told us not to make any dates for New Year, which was fast approaching, as Tom Mix had hired a huge banquet hall at the Ambassador Hotel, a good band and all the trimmings for an all night New Year's Eve party, which would be followed by a breakfast at a club at sunrise on New Year's Day. She said Tom had invited the whole movie colony and all the big stars would be there. I wouldn't have missed it if I'd broken a leg and I didn't, miss it I mean. With the festive season upon us we couldn't possibly accept all the invitations kindly given us, but we did put a helluva dent in them by doing what most movie folk did - hopping from one place to another, stopping for short spells. What wonderful people! What wonderful Christmases... I still smell the perfume from the lovely pines, see the steam rising from the delicious Tom and Jerry Mix, taste it and feel the warm glow of well-being. The faces were shining and happy, mine included, our breath left trails of vapour as we moved about laughing, talking and thinking of absurd gifts and pranks to play on our friends... the glorious green of the parks and gardens surrounding the mansions of Beverley Hills... in those days it was the only place to live.

I recall Clara taking us to Tom Mix's magnificent home, set on a rise and surrounded by park lawns. The other person who sticks in my mind from that visit was Mary Astor. I was incensed to hear that someone stole her diaries and the press really went to town on her. It is disgusting that because a person like Mary has worked hard, winning recognition for herself, they have no private life left. I was sorry I didn't have a chance to know her well, but she was a splendid actress and a charming woman.

I must confess Christmas in the Northern Hemisphere appealed much more to me than those "down under". I can never really believe it is Christmas here, which rather detracts from the age-old "spirit of Christmas", especially I miss those Tom and Jerries. From everything I have heard, Hollywood, too, has changed vastly, which is such a pity. Contrary to popular opinion, promoted particularly with some who have a

commercial axe to grind, progress has not made homo sapiens happier, in spite of the generally easier life-style – and much worse is, to a degree, people are less wholesome and kind... I've travelled far enough and lived long enough to know. As George Bernard Shaw so aptly put it, "What a shame youth is wasted on the young." I am not trying to denigrate today's young people in comparison with those sixty years ago. You've read my story and although there is an occasional detail I have to leave out to protect myself and others, I've written the truth as I've seen it and far from pretending to be a saint, I'll be lucky to get out of the earth's atmosphere. I'm told Saint Peter is really quite choosy, but I do hope he'll have me, although it would mean I'd be a bit lonely for a lot of friends.

On Christmas Eve, both Clara and I worked at our respective studios. Clara always worked at Paramount, with producer, B.P. Schulbery, while I was mostly at MGM and poverty row. When I was finished I drove madly over to Paramount. I was with an independent studio at the time and after a Christmas drink, we went our separate ways. America doesn't have a Boxing Day holiday, so we only had Christmas Day free and were going to make the most of it.

Clara's dressing room was packed out with dear and familiar faces as usual, including that of my secret love, Dick Arlen. He gave me a Christmas kiss which tasted better than Christmas dinner. The very handsome Buddy Rogers was also there, smiling as usual – he and Clara looked so alike they could have played brother and sister. A delightful couple who I have not mentioned before, dropped by. They were Mr and Mrs Ben Lyon. Mrs Lyon was the lovely star, Bebe Daniels. They looked wonderful together and were as delightful to know as they looked. I think Bebe and Ben were two of the first stars to become disenchanted with the changes which came to Hollywood later. They packed it in and went to live in London and never looked back, becoming incredibly popular in the

United Kingdom. Theirs was one of few lasting show business marriages and everyone loved them.



Ben Lyon



Bebe Daniels



Mauritz Stiller



Greta Garbo

In Clara's dressing room, Coop was leaning against the wall, silent as usual, not that it mattered. I've never seen so many hip flasks at one time. Clara had also managed to get some real bacardi rum and brother, it was potent! Ricardo Cortez was there - he was getting ready to play the male lead in *Ibñez, the*

Torrent, for MGM, opposite Greta Garbo who was getting a great deal of publicity build-up, but did not yet have much on film. She had come to Hollywood with Mauritz Stiller, who had successfully directed her in Europe, but did not see eye to eye with MGM studio heads. They kept Greta and let Stiller go. He died a couple of years later and I don't think Greta ever got over it.

That evening in the dressing room I don't think any of us, except perhaps, Ricardo, had yet met Greta, in fact we were hardly aware of her then, but we were later, believe me! I was and am one of her greatest admirers.

Ricardo was a nice chap, but at the time, worried about playing the Spaniard in the film authentically. He asked Clara to give him any tips she could about Spanish manners and mannerisms. Everyone knew about the torrid affair between Clara and Gilbert Roland, of course and she had a Spanish-type house, a rare a lot of Spanish clothes and her records were mostly Spanish or Mexican (the Mexican ones would have suited Gilbert Roland better, because although he always claimed to be Spanish, he is Mexican). She was also heavily into the Tango.

Soon after Rudy Valentino's death, most dark, Latin-looking men were flat out to follow in his great footsteps. Ricardo had the dark Latin looks, although he wasn't Latin. He was a quiet man and always a gentleman when I was in his company. He was married to Alma Rubens at this time and awhile later this became a tragedy for him. Alma had been in pictures since 1915, or maybe a little earlier and she was very good. She played the first film version of *Showboat* (later played by Ava Gardner) with Laura La Plante, whom I met at Universal. I only saw her once and that was in her coffin - she had died tragically young because of drugs. Her youth and beauty, even there in her coffin, gave me a blow to the solar plexus.

Shortly after her death, Clara and I were alone with Ricardo at his home and he told us he had done everything possible to have her cured. She had battled it too, but it was too strong for



Alma Rubens

her. He'd drive her around Hollywood and its surrounding districts at all hours of the night many times, both desperately hoping it would take her mind off the craving, but, he said, tears streaming down his face, suddenly she would open the car door, he'd screech to a halt, terrified she would be run over, she would leap out of the car and he just couldn't stop her. Often she was in scant clothing, covered only by a coat - she would disappear from sight in a demented search for drugs.

In the dressing room the din was deafening, the whole stable of stars seemed to be trailing in and out - even the great Emil Jannings dropped in to say Guten Tag (good day, to you), but there was no sign of Pola. Oh well, we had a good time anyway. Just when the place looked and sounded as if it would burst at the seams, a messenger arrived from B.P. Schulberg's office, saying Mr Schulberg thought we'd better move on while we still could. Taking the hint, we decided Edmund Goulding would be delighted to see us, so we gathered a few road signs - stop, go, keep off the grass - thinking they'd look lovely on Eddie's front lawn and descended on him in a horde.

He was feeling no pain when we arrived anyway and our party ended up beautifully there. Eddie was deep into plans to direct a silent version of *Rose Marie*, starring Joan Crawford. Some of the scenes were to be done at Yosemite Valley and as Clara had developed a slight "yen" for Eddie and Joan was a close neighbour and friend, Eddie invited us both to be his guests at Yosemite, supplying a suite at the hotel there. The hotel had an Indian name which I can pronounce, but not spell, anyway it was the only one there at that time and the only other buildings were

a few log cabins. Yosemite was still very wild, sparsely settled and beautiful and this provided the scene for a very peculiar tale, which I'll relate in context.

We had a quiet, family Christmas dinner with Bob, Clara and I exchanging gifts, before getting ready for the usual Christmas merry go round of taking presents to our friends and enjoying, in exchange, copious amounts of my favourite Tom and Jerry. I'd received cards and gifts from Glory, who wrote that she and the boys would probably be with me in a couple of months. I relayed this information to Bob and Clara that night and both said it was swell news and they would have a fine welcome ready.

Clara and I both worked a few days that week - Clara's picture was almost finished and the epic I was working on wasn't far off either. One night Clara said she was going out to Culver City to a trial night of greyhound racing and asked if I'd care to come. Naturally I was interested so we went. Horse racing was not yet allowed in California, in fact it was outlawed almost everywhere except Kentucky, of Derby fame. Culver City had a funny little course, but it was surprisingly crowded. I don't remember if betting was allowed, but I doubt it.



Clara Kimball Young

Many movie people were there and I was introduced to a lady who interested me a great deal, as Glory had tickled the ivories for her acting numerous times in far away Methven - she was Clara Kimball Young. The two Claras were delighted to meet and Clara Bow vowed she had been named after Clara Kimball Young. Miss Young was an awesome vision as she was extremely well endowed in the chest area, enough to mesmerise most men. I couldn't help thinking she must feel top

heavy and the size of her “appendages” could even pose an accident hazard; nevertheless she had been a very big star in the early flicks and was a warm and friendly person. Her career was static at this point, but as with Pauline Frederick, who I’ve already mentioned, she went on playing small parts for many years.

Apparently the dog races were not a resounding success, although the hip flasks were, for I heard no more of them, which was no great loss to me.

On New Years Eve we were lucky enough not to have to work so we spent the day resting up for the big party. During the day Clara said she had a private matter to discuss with me. It concerned the two German women working for her, a maid and a cook. She said she had been in the habit of writing a weekly pay check for each of them and then another check on which she left the amount open; I gaped at her, rather stunned by her trusting nature, but just said - “So ...?” as if I didn’t know.

“Well, the food bills are really exorbitant. I made a quick check recently and considering everything, allowing for plenty of food and drink and taking into account the fact that Dad and you and I are hardly ever home for dinner, I think I’m being got at. Come on - I’ll show you my check book stubs.”

I must say I thought the same thing. The amounts were ridiculous. “Why don’t you let Bob talk to them,” I suggested.

Clara shook her red mane, “You know what Daddy’s like Tui. No tact at all and perhaps I’m judging them unfairly. Say, be a pal honey, will you keep an eye on them. They won’t be suspicious of you.”

“Okay, I’ll keep an eye open when I can,” I agreed. That undertaking and what I eventually uncovered was to cost me dearly in heartache, fear and discomfort later. Perhaps World War Two paid them back for me. I hope so, much as I loathe war.

Herbert, looking tall, smart and polished in his chauffeur’s uniform, drove the equally shining Lincoln, with Clara and I,

dressed to kill, sitting back and talking non-stop all the way along Wiltshire Boulevard. Clara was doing most of the chattering, but I wasn't paying much heed as I looked around, noticing little changes, which I'd seen without much thought before. Buildings were becoming much higher and the dear old Pacific Electric red street cars which used to trundle right through Hollywood Boulevard, were being replaced more and more by buses. I felt uneasy, time was beginning to go more quickly and young though I was, I didn't like it. I had loved the "one big family" atmosphere I'd known for the first couple of years.

By now we were nearing the forecourt of the great Ambassador Hotel with its tall palm trees, fish ponds and fountains. Clara and I grinned at each other, glowing with excitement and anticipation of the good time ahead. Driving into the forecourt reminded me of a very amusing scene enacted there by two extra famous stage and, to a lesser degree, screen stars, who spent a few days at the hotel together.

In their youth these two talented ladies were very high-spirited and great drinking buddies. One of them belonged to a long line of famous actors, most of whom were similarly high-spirited, but with the passing years the said lady became quite staid and later in life was highly respected, giving the screen some wonderful performances.

The story in Hollywood went that one night the two beauties were feeling no pain - remember prohibition? These two sure as hell didn't, their favourite tippie in those troubled times being ether cocktails. They sallied forth to the large fish pond fountain in the forecourt of the Ambassador's, proceeded to shed their outer garments and frolic joyfully in the splashing water and chase the fish, which no doubt enjoyed it enormously, cheering up their otherwise dull lives. The spectacle was also enjoyed by the considerable parade of patrons going to endless functions not the least of which was the universally known Coconut Grove, where every big band in the land loved to play. It was there that I first saw Bing Crosby and his Rhythm Boys - I already loved

Bing for his voice, but my admiration increased when I saw him, didn't it with everybody?

The court was fairly well lit, but not bright, giving it a more tropical atmosphere. The water-ladies were drenched and very high spirited by now and also decided the patrons should be too. They were in the midst of all this, shouting and whooping it up, when several members of the management arrived and with considerable agitation, spoiled all the fun by helping extricate the dripping ladies from among the frogs, lily-pad tendrils and the bitterly disappointed goldfish. You see one of the ladies had made a Broadway Play, *The Goldfish Bowl*, very famous, so naturally the gold fish were on her side, no doubt remembering the cunning of said lady, for "hiding" almost akin to their own, but hers was sheer genius for hiding grog back stage.... As the play progressed, so did she - drunkenly. Frantic search produced nothing alcoholic. By this time, our splendid actress was trying to climb the Curtain to the "flies". A smart aleck assistant stage manager ruined her day by discovering that her water-cooler bottle was half full of gin. She wept frustrated, the audience was hilarious. 'Twas even said the pond gold fish giggled, one was suspected of hiccuping. Even gold fish can be happy if they try. The upshot of being frustrated in their game, was to make the ladies more and more angry as the night wore on. They were just as spirited, but more revengeful than happy. Before sleeping that night they vowed vengeance the next day. After a short nap the indignant pair called their favourite bell hop to order a large liquid breakfast which helped cheer them up somewhat. They also gave the messenger a list of odd bits and pieces to purchase for them. As the morning proceeded so did the high-spirited stars. They had blown up about three dozen gaily colored balloons. With much abandonment and laughter they tied them to sundry ladies' undergarments, panties, bras, stockings, kotex and even the odd French letter or two. Then, throwing open the windows, the two dears blithely emptied all the balloons out onto the unsuspecting public. To say quite a

number of Angelenos were surprised at this spectacle was an understatement. Wafting down several floors of this most famous hostelry, via colourful balloons, such “oddments” incited mirth, disgust and in a few cases (mainly management), outright disbelief, especially as the two culprits were at the windows, making no effort to hide their guilt, laughing their heads off.

A great deal of frantic effort by staff and public alike had soon resulted in the collection of the offending articles and balloons, which had really given the forecourt a festive air. By nightfall there was at least one vacant suite at the hotel. I regaled Clara with the story as we approached our destination and she also laughed heartily as she hadn’t heard it before. So sorry I can’t name the two sky-larkers, but I’m sure you will understand. However Jack Pickford did tell me that Ethel Barrymore and Marjorie Rambeau were very high-spirited when they were young - but I don’t think it could have been them - surely?



Tom Mix and Tony

The forecourt presented a more sedate image as we alighted on this New Years Eve. We joined the glittering throng wending its way past the shopping lane, entering the foyer and splitting up into groups going to the many varied parties in progress. We ascended by elevator and entered the huge banquet hall. We were by no means the first to arrive. Tom Mix was standing near the entrance to greet his guests and a good band was playing. Couples were dancing and the incessant popping of corks gave a festive impression and the lie once more to the rigidness of prohibition. There had been no stinting of decorations either – the place was lavishly bedecked with tinsel, streamers and balloons (no, not the ones left over by our high-spirited friends!) Tom never did believe in doing things by halves. A huge portrait of Tom and his beloved horse, Tony, adorned one wall. A banquet table ran the entire length of the room and on it was a feast the likes of which I had never seen before, or for that matter, since. Confections made in the image of Tony, huge bowls of caviar and select paté, including plenty of Paté de foie gras; a great pastry peacock wearing the exquisite tailfeathers, was the centre piece. The napery was white as snow, the silver aglow and the whole effect gorgeous and very lush.

Guests were arriving in large numbers now. Some we knew, others we didn't, but we mingled and became friendly with them all. Some I've already mentioned, but those I haven't include Fredric March – he was to be Clara's leading man in a picture titled *The Wild Party* (ahem, a very apt choice, I must say!) His wife Florence Eldridge was with him. She was a very fine stage actress, who did very little film work. They remained married until death parted them. Freddie was a lovely man and what an actor! He claimed Clara for a Charleston, so I went to the powder room to freshen up and sit awhile – my damn shoes hurt. Being young and silly I hadn't worn them before and they pinched a little. The nice easy chair in the powder room was a welcome sight and sitting, I looked up to see a familiar face. "Excuse me, aren't you Helen Vinson?"



Fredric March & Florence Eldridge Helen Vinson

“Why, yes, have we met before? You look familiar too.” She smiled.

“No, we haven’t met, but I’ve admired your work very much and am pleased to have a chance to tell you so,” I replied. “Nobody plays a bitch as well as you do,” I added, putting my big foot right in. I flushed furiously. “Oh, I’m sorry—” I began.

“Don’t worry, that’s a fine compliment and I’ll take it as such,” Helen smiled down at me, finished powdering her lovely nose and sat down near me to talk. She was as natural and nice as she looked - her own character couldn’t have been further from those she played, that was obvious. We were laughingly trying to guess at the tremendous cost of Tom’s “clambake”, when the powder room door flew open and in flung the familiar form of Lupe Valez, whom I’d never met, but seen on screen many times. Silly rumours had been circulating about an imaginary feud between Lupe and Clara, which was ridiculous, as they hadn’t met each other and their work style was entirely different. Lupe looked at Helen and me, nodded to Helen in an

offhand sort of way, then continued ninety to the dozen, half in English, half in Mexican to a friend who had come in with her. They had just sat down in front of the mirror when in bounced Clara. Lupe and Clara stared at each other for a moment, then,

“Ah, Clarita. I’ve always wanted to meet you, but we are not at the same studio. All this silly feud stuff - don’t you agree?”



Lupe Valez



Johnny Weissmuller

She held out her hand to Clara and the next thing they were hugging each other and laughing about it all. Clara was truly the most friendly star I’ve ever known and welcomed Lupe’s offer of friendship for the time being anyway. Lupe said soon after,

“Clarita I am going to introduce you to my Johnny, that will show them what I think of their silly feuds, eh?”

I’m not sure if at that time Lupe and Johnny Weissmuller, better known as Tarzan, were married, but if they weren’t then, they were soon after. Lupe went on,

“But Clara, Johnny is mine so no stealing, huh?”

Both girls giggled, holding hands. Clara spotted me,

“Oh, this is where you’ve been. I looked all over. I see, the shoes, huh?”

I nodded and groaned. I turned to Helen and said I hoped we’d meet again, but after that party we never did.

The party was in full swing now. I lapped up the lovely French champagne, a drink I’ve always been partial to, and proceeded to join in the frolics and have a ball. I danced with Coop, who was with Clara, but now and then I noticed with a certain degree of puzzlement that Lupe was giving Gary the “big eye”, Johnny notwithstanding. Johnny was as conspicuous for his height as Gary, but Gary was much slimmer.

Tom was at the head of the table, chatting mostly to other cowboy stars about the thing they knew best – westerns. That great guy, Ken Maynard, Hoot Gibson and my good Australian friend, Snowy Baker (who’d dragged himself away from his love, the Uplifters Club,) were with him and they were having an animated discussion about the value of having a horse as well known as themselves. Most agreed that it was important and in those days I think they were right. Most did have horses nearly as famous as themselves, especially with the kids at Saturday matinees. Tom had wanted to bring his Tony to the party, but the management had been firm that they couldn’t start a precedent, besides the lifts were too small.

Bea Lillie had been unable to attend that night, due to other arrangements. I hadn’t seen much of the Lillies lately – Bea was hurrying through her picture, *Exit Smiling*, now as she had Broadway commitments coming up and would be leaving their home on the mountain.

Midnight struck, which prompted the band to do likewise. Everybody was filled with the New Year Spirit to differing degrees – I was feeling no pain and became caught up in the Auld Lang Syne routine. Now there were hundreds of us – I’m sure half were gate-crashers. We formed a great chain and swung

around the dance floor screaming Auld Lang Syne, Whoopee, or whatever else entered our silly heads. The noise was incredible, both inside and out of the building, whistles blowing, motor horns honking, hundreds of them up and down the boulevards. It took an hour to calm down those who were still on deck. Others were taking a quiet doze.

We settled down around the festive board and proceeded to punish the food and liquor, which seemed never to stop coming. The Peacock was unrecognisable now, except for its tail feathers, some of which had been souvenired and the rest were scattered rather forlornly on the table. As the goodies disappeared so did many of the guests. Tom admitted knowing but a few of them, but said,

“What the hell, it’s New Years Eve!”

I guess that made sense. Tom had been a United States Marshall before becoming a western movie star - he knew and loved people. When talkies came, Tom formed a big circus and took to the roads. He delighted in owning fast and fancy automobiles which had his gold initials on all doors. Tragically he was killed in one of his fast cars in 1940, hurrying too much to catch up with one of his shows. I feel that another era went with Tom and Tony, but this night those events were far away.

One of the most interesting facets of this party was the presence of so many who were even then considered old-timers. The Novak sisters, Jane and Eva, were still around. One was working at Universal when I was there. Jane had been in pictures from their earliest days, 1914 or 16. Many who had been early stars were, at this time, still on top. They had begun in their teens, as I had, but they began before 1920 and I remembered them from Glory’s piano-playing days back in the first World War. Most people I speak to today find this fact very fascinating and so do I, but with mixed feelings, for the times were often East Lynnish for us.

Although many had departed, the party was still swinging gaily. I suspect most of those who had left were the gate-crashers,

which left mainly those who were to go to the Breakfast Club at sunrise. Most of us had formed into little groups of people who had most in common and as usual the conversation centred around movies and their people. There was always a special piece of gossip to be eagerly lapped up, especially if it was about someone we didn't know personally, for this way we felt we did know them, keeping the big family atmosphere.

I joined those having a short nap, flopping gratefully on the comfy armchair in the powder room, not for long, those still being gay woke me and I decided to be considerably more merry. A competition was in progress between Clara and Lupe to decide who was the better Charleston dancer - I'd bet Clara every time. I don't think Joan Crawford was there but had she been, both Clara and Lupe would have been left far behind - Joan was a champion dancer with many prizes to prove it.

By now a dim light was showing in the east and Tom said it was time to go get our ham and eggs at the Breakfast Club. We lustily sang *For He's a Jolly Good Fellow*, followed by the usual cheers, then departed from a long night's journey into day - it was a night I'll always remember.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

A few days later I had some free time and joined Beatrice Lillie when she went to MGM to work on the final stages of her first movie, *Exit Smiling*. Bea's household had broken up, Bobby and Nannie having left for New York, where Bea would join them in a few days. Bea mentioned that Marion Davies had asked her for a weekend at San Simeon - "Peter Pan" squinted at me,

"I had to refuse - I just couldn't cope with all that royalty and stuffiness," she giggled - that was Bea, always tongue-in-cheek about being Lady Peel.

I'd had a tearful farewell from Bobby, Lucie and Nanny, I loved them all so and was never again to see Lucie or Bobby,

although dear Lucie did send post cards and letters from New York and England for a year or two.



Franklin Pangborn



Doris Lloyd



Harry C. Myers



Jack Pickford

At the studio I also saw Franklin Pangborn, a “fussy-type” comic and an English comedienne, Doris Lloyd, who were also in the picture. I enjoyed knowing them all, including another old timer in the cast, Harry C. Myers. I’ve already mentioned that Jack Pickford was the leading man and Sam Taylor the director. Some time after this a story circulated around Hollywood about Sam. In 1929 Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks senior made *The Taming of the Shrew* – who in heavens name doesn’t know that the “Bard” wrote that, but to everyone’s amusement the credits gave this piece of priceless information – “Additional dialogue by Sam Taylor”. The joke was not to end there, for many years later, 1966, in fact, a much publicised duo, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, both British born, but very big in the American picture scene, made another version of the picture which gave three writers credits for the script, but none of them was named Shakespeare.

Closing day of *Exit Smiling* was a happy one – at least Bea made it so – she made the title come to life. A few days later I said a very tearful farewell to one of the greatest artists I was ever to meet and a very dear friend. In the next few years I saw Bea only a few times and those, briefly, but since then never. She is the only one still left from the great three of the Andre Charlot’s Revue and she is at one end of the earth, I another, but Quién Sabe? I often think of those happy days and am thankful that I was present at the opening of the first live theatre in Hollywood. Now, most likely, the El Capitan no longer exists.

It was there that some time later I saw the successful *No No Nannette*. A tragedy linked three of that show’s main players, one of whom was the leading man (something “Raymond” as I remember). He was married to a brilliant stage actress named Dorothy MacKay – she and Richard Bennet (father of Constance and Joan) did *The Dove* on stage in downtown Los Angeles. I saw it and it was magnificent. A young and very promising actor, Paul Kelly, who was starting what was thought to be a bright career, was staying at a very well known Hollywood

hotel, not far from the El Capitan, with Dorothy and her husband. Paul visited them in their rooms one night and it was alleged the husband had too much to drink and insulted Dorothy during an argument. Paul and the husband tangled between the twin beds and Paul struck him, knocking him down. The tragic part was the husband struck his head on the corner of the lamp table, hard and died.²⁶ A similar scene is played somewhere every day of the year, but nothing except perhaps a black eye or bloody nose results. It was a one in a thousand chance and the law being the law, both Paul and Dorothy spent a few years in jail. I later met Paul and greatly liked his quiet manner. While in jail, Dorothy spent her time writing a story called *Ladies of the Mob*, which was bought for Clara by Paramount and Clara played it very well indeed. This, a real drama and *Wings* I think were Clara's best pictures.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

I received a telegram from Glory, saying they had reached Vancouver, Canada, travelling on the steamship *Orangi*. Bob had helped me get everything ready for them. Clara loaned me her Lincoln and chauffeur to pick them up at the railway depot. I'd taken an apartment in Hollywood and another for the family as I didn't want to impose people she hadn't met on Clara.

This episode in my life was a great and expensive disappointment to me and caused me a great deal of mental and physical upset. I don't intend to draw the wretched affair out, but feel it has to be told truthfully as part of my story and to straighten out many garbled versions I've heard from relatives down through the years. What I didn't know was that although Glory had left Queensland Harry, they were not divorced, therefore, contrary to what I believed, she could not get a permit to stay, only a temporary visa to visit me. Also, although I had many heartrending appeals for money, particularly for enough to enable them to come over and live with me, because times were

poor in New Zealand, actually Glory had quite a large and prosperous show going. The tent and gear were valuable and also she had quite a collection of good live-stock, all of which would have brought in a fair bit of cash. However, as she was leaving for the golden streets of Hollywood, my darling impulsive Mum unfortunately didn't bother to sell out, just gave it away. To this day I have no idea to whom.

All of my life I have been weak where my mother was concerned and seldom refused her requests, no matter what it cost me. I don't regret what I did for her. I simply loved her too much. She was a good mother when we were young; which is all that really matters, for that is the important time. One regret I do have is that Glory kept the real facts and the truth of what she was up to from me. This did hurt and caused most of what trouble there was between us.

I met Glory and my youngest brother, Owen, at the depot. When I asked where my other brother was, she said she'd left him in charge of a lot of gear she had brought as far as Vancouver and would send for it when she was settled. I believed her explanation, although I was somewhat puzzled. The fact was she had brought a lot of baggage thinking I'd be able to straighten things out for her to be allowed to stay. Of course, I couldn't. She had also generously paid the fare of an American fellow who had travelled with her show. I didn't meet him, nor hear much about him. So, money was flowing like water and certainly faster than I could make it.

Glory took an immediate dislike to Hollywood - prohibition offended her for a start, as it did most of us. Clara had very thoughtfully told me to bring them all to her place for dinner, but I felt she and Glory didn't like each other, but then again they would have been very competitive regarding men. The beach house at Santa Monica also failed to please. It was a proper five or six roomed house at the beach - no shack - but Glory loathed it and said it was too far from Hollywood and me.

The fact that I had to work and would not be on tap every minute to entertain didn't occur to her, so we lost the down payments on the house and took up residence in the apartments. Every day I provided plenty of dollars for her to go do what she wanted with Owen as an escort and Bob had very generously given them a lovely Moon tourer car. To cut it all short there was no way it was going to work out, so at a big loss, back they went to Vancouver. My other brother, Clyde, came for a short visit, then also returned to Canada. Glory also disliked Canada - that I don't blame her for, I am not entirely in love with the dump myself, even if I did spend my honeymoon there, or perhaps because of it.

However they saw more of the world than they would have normally and did a vaudeville circuit there which was good experience. Finally they decided to go back to New Zealand and on board the ship Glory met a man with whom she was to spend the next forty years, but that is another story which had nothing to do with me except indirectly through her. He played no part otherwise in my life or affairs.²⁷

My family's visit was of much less than a year's duration and certainly it brought me little happiness, but I had done what I said I would and certainly lavished on them everything I could before, then and after. I couldn't have accomplished all this without help - Clara was kind and gave them a couple of parties, but everyone seemed poles apart and now I was heavily in debt to Bob. He said not to worry and everything would be okay, but nevertheless I did worry, especially as work was a little slack around this time, which was always tough on those not under contract to a studio.

Clara asked me to move back into her house, but I declined with thanks, saying it was easier for me to have my own little pad when working. I moved from the expensive apartment into the Warner Kelton Hotel, just off Vine Street in the heart of Hollywood. While work was slack I helped Clara all I could, as she needed a trusted friend to do many little things, but this

zealous care of her household business affairs had the unfortunate consequence of landing me in County jail for a weekend. I don't really know why I insisted on keeping my own place as I stayed overnight often at Clara's place and Bob was pretty much in evidence most of the time.

Keeping in mind Clara's request that I keep an eye on her two German servants, I'd been keeping tabs on the groceries and general household expenses and I caught them red-handed filling in the open check with an amount double that on the bill. Clara also checked on a few things and then confronted them with the facts before giving them their notice. They realised denials were useless and turned on me bitterly, blaming me entirely for their dismissal, which was unjust, but even if it had just been me, I still would have alerted Clara and why not for heavens sake - they were nothing to me and besides they had a damn good job which they had not done very well at all and added to that they had been dishonest and greedy. After they departed Herbert said they had approached him to "pad" the petrol bill, but he wouldn't have anything to do with it. He said he had been afraid to say anything in case we didn't believe him.

A week or so later I was in my rooms at the hotel when the phone rang,

"There are two policemen, not in uniform, here to see you. Shall I send them up?"

"Yes," I said, very puzzled. It must be something to do with the traffic laws, I thought, but although I racked my brains quickly, I couldn't think of anything I'd done. I opened the door to let the men in, offering them chairs and asking what was up. They stared steadily at me and then slowly around the room. On my wall I had a few humorous smart-aleck subtitles from some of our movies hanging among the pictures.

"What does that mean?" Asked one of the men, going up to look at a title.

"Just what it says," I replied. "Surely you realise it is a subtitle from a movie?"

“HmMMM,” was all he said and sat down again.

I felt a shaft of fear and the rising of my Irish temper.

“Look here, who are you and what do you want with me? I’ve done nothing to interest the police,” I said.

“Oh, we’re not from the police,” said the same guy. “At least not the sort of police you mean.”

I was really frightened now and looking back I guess the way they were acting was designed to produce that effect, although they were quite polite and didn’t molest me in any way. For the first time the other fellow spoke,

“We’re immigration officers, Miss Lorraine, it has come to our attention that you have overstayed your visa period for quite some time. Also we have to look into a few other aspects of your case.”

“Yes,” I said, “I have overstayed my visa time, but you’d be surprised how many officials of one sort or another have told me not to worry and that after five years, which won’t be long now I can take out citizenship papers. It has cost me a lot, workwise, not being able to leave and enter the country as I choose. Besides, for God’s sake, you of all people must know there are hundreds of thousands of people here who’ve overstayed their visa time.” I was thinking clearly now and had a few questions of my own, “Anyway, who told you about me and why? I’m no criminal and a good citizen, so where did you get your information?”

“Sorry, we’re not at liberty to tell you that. Besides there are other allegations to look into.”

“Oh, like what? I understand about overstaying here, but what else are you saying?”

“Nothing, Miss Lorraine, but will you please come down to City Hall with us to sign some papers?”

I was scared now, for sure. I’d never even had a parking ticket in my life, so experience with the police was new to me and frightening.

“I wish to call my fiance, Mr Robert Bow,” I announced.

One nodded yes. Bob was home as I expected him to be. He was coming to take me to dinner. It was early on a Saturday afternoon. I explained the problem as best I could on the phone and Bob became quite agitated, saying he'd call his attorney and be right down to City Hall and not to worry. I went into my dressing room and quickly got ready.

At the desk was dear old Monroe Salisbury, who had been well known as a silent screen actor, but was past it now. He was our desk clerk and we were good friends. I left my key and briefly told him what was happening, asking him to tell anyone asking that I was out of town. The officers told me I'd be home by nightfall, the lying rats. On the way Downtown they asked me some curious questions, such as,

“Have you many boyfriends, Miss Lorraine?”

I reminded them it was common knowledge I was engaged to Mr Bow and what did they mean by such a question?

They ignored that, but one, a surly creep, asked,

“Have you had many illnesses?”

“Like what?”

“Well, like any diseases?” he said, “Or things like that,” he added lamely.

I was truly naive about a number of things still, but even so, a light began to dawn and I damn near fainted. Horror filled me and I began to feel like a trapped animal, however I managed to keep some .sort of calm, knowing Bob would be at City Hall to meet us... that's what I thought: Weakly I said,

“Are you suggesting I have what my mother called a ‘bad disease’?”

“I'm not suggesting anything, just asking questions.”

“Well, I'll not discuss such a horrible thing,” I said, “until I meet Mr Bow and his attorney.”

We were downtown Los Angeles by now and heading towards City Hall, but they didn't stop there, instead they stopped outside the Hall of Justice nearby. I've forgotten how many storeys high it was, but in those days the two top floors

were the County Jail and that's where those two rats took me. I was frantic now - they left me sitting in a small room saying somebody would be in shortly. A matron entered soon after. She had a piece of paper in her hand and said,

"Did the officers tell you you could go to a convent for the weekend instead of here? Overstaying your permit is not a criminal matter. You're very young and don't belong here."

I started to cry and told her how I'd been told I was going to City Hall, but she told me as it was election day everything was closed. She also added that they should have had better sense and brought me in on Monday. I howled harder than ever, but she really was very nice and said,

"I'd like to send you to the convent, but we're short-staffed. But don't worry, I'll watch out for you over the weekend and you'll be in a —" she hesitated and I knew she was going to say cell, but instead, "small place by yourself."

While all this was happening, Bob had chased all over City Hall and got nowhere. His attorney showed up and said,

"She won't be here. Come, we'll go to the County Jail - I think we'll find her there."

"What," screeched Bob, "You mean those bastards would take a young girl alone like that, one who's committed no crime, to that jail?"

"Well, I think they might - I know she's no criminal, but she did overstay her visa you know."

"To hell with that" Bob shouted. "Hundreds of 'wet-backs' come over the border every day and those fuckin' jokers turn their heads the other way. I want that kid out of there now!"

The attorney shook his head, "We can't get her out until Monday - the election has everything closed."

"Well, I want to see her now and let her know," said Bob, "Sheeit, she'll be crazy with worry."

And how bloody right he was. The matron had taken me to the desk, where I had signed for the few valuables I had. I was

given a bluish-grey uniform and matron asked me to take a shower. I was terrified and weeping quietly. She said kindly,

“Don’t be frightened, kid, this is just usual procedure for anyone coming in here for any reason. You’ll be okay when things get going again on Monday.”

I threw the uniform down and refused to wear it, but the kindly woman just said,

“That’s okay, you’re not charged with anything. You can wear your own clothes, but keep the uniform to sleep in as you’ve no nightie.”

I stopped sniffing and thanked her for her kindness. She smiled,

“That’s nice - not too many thank me here, but then not too many come in here for so little.”

I didn’t quite understand what was going on, but while having a brief shower, I sure did some praying. As I was dressing the woman left for a few minutes and when she returned she said,

“There’s someone to see you, then I’ll take you inside - follow me.”

My heart thudded with fear, but for one brief moment I thought, thank god, Bob will take me home. I suppose I was meant to have this experience, but I don’t suggest it for tender young hearts, especially since the whole incident, from the immigration officers on, was illegal procedure really. I was only taken for “holding”, stemming from some very questionable information, until proper procedures could be followed. The officers had every right to take me to the convent where the nuns kept a watchful eye on those under their care. I love the nuns and had very beautiful friends among them in New Zealand, so taken there, I wouldn’t have gone through this traumatic experience of terror and my health, especially my nerves, would have been better from then on.

It is mid-winter as I write this about fifty years later and it is chilly, but I am sweating just from remembering it.

The matron left me in a small visitors room and a man rose from a chair, coming forward with his hand outstretched, mentioning his name – to this day I can't remember it.

He saw I was very distressed, so put his arm around my shoulder, leading me to a seat and said,

“I'm your fiance's attorney – he was only able to contact me about an hour ago. You'd have been out of here hours ago in normal times, but between the election for President and it being Saturday. I can't get the men I want for signatures.”

I started to weep again and he took my hand, holding it warmly in his own.

“Be brave, Tui, Bob sends his fondest love. They wouldn't let him in to see you – he's boiling mad. I promise you'll be out of here Monday morning – it's late now, so it's only for one day.”

“Yes,” I howled, “and two nights.”

“Never mind, dear. There'll be a nice shake-up about this and perhaps a head or two will fall before I'm finished with them.”

That was cold consolation that unhappy night, but later he was as good as his word and believe me, there was a lovely shake up. Fortunately it was kept out of the papers at that time, but later, when I was married or was newsworthy it was mentioned, although never nastily. I just didn't want Clara's name dragged into it. I'm glad it wasn't. I told the attorney the whole story and he listened carefully, saying,

“There's something rotten in Denmark here and I'll get the whole lot, don't worry.”

He was so right – there certainly was something rotten, he was wrong about the location though, it wasn't Denmark, more like Germany. I liked the man – he was kind and strong in his manner and gave me some measure of confidence. God knows, I needed it for the next forty-eight hours. The matron came to get me and the attorney said again,

“Don't worry, we're right with you,” and was gone.

He was wrong again – I was inside and he was outside.

Matron beckoned me to follow her, I was so tired by now I had little feeling left, except bewilderment. I knew I had broken some small law in overstaying, but to be hauled off to jail like this: I just couldn't believe it. Finally with much clanking of keys and steel doors rasping shut, we were "in". It was "lights out" already - all day I'd been kept in the "hold room", not knowing what was to happen, or when.

There was a stir among the inmates,

"Oh, goodie, a new fish!"

It was the first time I'd heard that expression and, thank God, it was the last, under these circumstances. Shouted comments including plenty of bad language, flew thick and fast.

"Who'd they catch you fucking - and where?"

"It had better not be on my territory or I'll bust you wide open!"

I gasped, shaking all over. The matron raised her voice and took on a tone I hadn't heard before. Naming one woman, she said,

"One more crack out of you, or bad language and it's solitary, GET IT?"

Not fazed one little bit, the woman, obviously a prostitute said sarcastically,

"O pardon me, modom, la-de-dah, what have we here, the First Lady?"

This quip brought forth gales of raucous laughter which ended abruptly when the lights were all switched on by a man on duty outside the cell block. The matron led me to a little single cell at the end of the row, unlocked it and took me in, whispering,

"Don't take any notice of them and don't answer. They'll soon shut up."

Again I thanked her and I guess my stricken face must have touched her for she pressed my arm, saying it would soon be over and I'd be back home. The lights went out and all was very

quiet now. I slipped into the clean bunk and was soon out like the lights, thank God.

Unfortunately for me my comatose state was short-lived. Even on ordinary Saturday nights all over the world, I'm sure jails must be very busy, but with this being election night, drunks, whores and those who took advantage of the festivities to "roll" the drunks, were hauled in making an endless procession of racy and pathetic females, most being taken to a large common cell. A few were lucky enough to be placed in two-bunk cells or the small number of singles. The drunks kept the place lively, singing, fighting and using some language that even in this day and age, I haven't heard since. Had I not been so terrified, I could have found it all extremely enlightening. The fighting scared the hell out of me, but nobody else was the least perturbed.

Sometime in the early hours we all must have dozed, but it seemed like just a minute before I heard,

"Come on you fancy dames - out! make your beds, clean the floors and smarten yourselves up."

I jumped out of bed, put my own clothes on, then made up the bunk as best I knew how. They had let me keep my comb and lipstick, that was all. The small basin had a cold water tap and a small piece of soap - that cold water felt soothing on my swollen, tear-stained face. I must have continued crying when I was asleep. The cell next to me held two women who had been there when I was brought in. They were surly types, even with each other, not speaking except to snarl a word or two occasionally.

Tentatively I asked,

"Excuse me please, could you tell me where to get a broom?"

They glared at me disbelievingly,

"Oh, listen to it willya, the ducharse wants a broom."

The raucous laughter shattered what little composure I had - I felt weak at the knees and red in the face - I sat down heavily on the bed and the floodgates opened again. After this I seemed

to be forgotten, thank God. I just sat there and worried, never far from tears. I had no idea what time it was, but a few of the inmates started to chant,

“We want our pig-swill. Open up lover boy.”

It must have been near breakfast time for shortly our cell doors did open. I noticed that they all stepped outside and stood silently there so I followed suit, quickly.

A woman, younger than the matron of yesterday, marched in, unsmiling and stern looking. Glancing along the row, she stared at me at the end of the line,

“New fish, huh?” she said coldly - it was a statement more than a question.

Some of the women tittered, but quickly became silent as she eyed them in turn.

“Okay, wake up, left face, single file to the dining room.”

We followed the leader, doors clanging open in front of us and closed as we passed through. The leader turned into the first row of long tables, or trestles, with long hard stools either side. I really felt too ill and exhausted to eat, but thought I had better look as if I was trying. For once in my life I was glad to be small - I was seated between two women whose proportions would have been suited to lady wrestlers. Their voices and conversation didn't belie their looks either, as they tossed articles from the table to each other. A “trusty” walked along the row with a huge coffeepot, pouring the thick, black, but good and hot liquid into our tin mugs. I have never been very fond of coffee, but I sure looked forward to it on this occasion. Politely I asked one hefty lady if she'd be kind enough to pass the sugar. She looked at me as if I was from outer space, a long way off in those days, and howled a laugh,

“Why sure, duchess, where do ya want it?”

She slid it towards me and knowing I'd turned scarlet, I thanked her quickly, used the sugar and endeavoured to make myself even smaller.

I don't remember what the breakfast consisted of except for some lumpy porridge and the coffee; I could only pretend to eat. Even if it had been good, I couldn't have eaten it as I was literally sick with worry. It was a quick and lively affair and soon we were trudging back to our cells. I lay on the bunk thinking, if only I could sleep the day away, but of course I couldn't. The place was fairly quiet now – some with hangovers were doing it hard, groaning and vowing “never again”. How familiar that expression was to become through the years.

Suddenly I thought of Glory and New Zealand. How could I tell her about this – I was crying softly again. As I think back now I don't think I ever did tell Glory the whole story. Later she knew that I had some trouble with the Immigration Department, but I didn't ever tell her of my short, but devastating experience at the top of the Los Angeles Hall of Justice!

The day dragged by – we went to meals, came back and lay on our bunks. Nobody bothered me except once or twice, more in fun than nastiness, somebody would yell, “How yer doin' duchess? Guess this dump ain't like yer castle, eh?”

I didn't answer and distinctly heard a lowered voice say,

“Aw, leave the kid alone, she's a 'limey'. They all talk like that. Besides I heard she ain't done nothin' but over stay her time in Uncle Sam's heaven – shouldn't be here, but you know the lazy bastards couldn't care less.”

I don't know who my champion was, but I was very grateful for after that I was left alone. Obviously my slightly British accent had caused the initial derision.

A restless night followed and I was awake long before the “rise and shine” order came, crazy to be gone from the place. Periodically different women were escorted out, some to return later, some to be set free. At about ten-thirty the matron came to my cell, smiling. She had been off duty on Sunday and I was pleased to see her face again.

“Come on, dear,” kindly she omitted using my unusual first name – she knew her business.

I hope there are more like her. As I followed her out, one or two yelled,

“So long, duchess, half yer luck.”

I half-waved to them and then we were in the visitors room, where Bob and his attorney waited. I started to cry, of course and Bob put his arm around me, saying,

“It’s alright hon, I’m taking you home right now.”

The attorney nodded, smiling. Matron was leaving and I thanked her humbly for her understanding kindness. She laughed saying,

“Just don’t let me catch you back in here. No, I’m joking, I know I won’t. Goodbye and good luck dear.”

We said goodbye to Bob’s attorney, who I saw a few times in the next few years – he certainly did know his business and also the right people to go to for favours and Bob held my arm closely as we walked to the car park. There were tears in his eyes as he told me how desperately he had tried to “spring” me (I may as well use the correct jargon) over the disastrous weekend. I thanked him tearfully and clung to him as a child to a father, for he was to me, as to Clara, a father figure. But I did think I was in love with him, too inexperienced then to know differently.

Bob took me to Beverley Hills instead of my hotel, saying that Clara was very upset and wanted me to come “home” so we could all forget the whole affair. I never did forget, though, nor have I yet. It left me with a “haunt”. Clara and I fell on each other’s shoulders, crying, when I arrived, Bob clucking around like a mother hen, saying cook had a special early lunch ready and to dry up. Soon we were laughing and shiaking as usual, but not too much about jail. I said,

“Oh, Clara, I’m a jailbird now.”

She hooted with laughter of course and so did Bob.

“Yeah, but not as good at it as Bonnie Parker or Al Capone,” she spluttered.

To that I still say Amen and thank God, not that I have a halo or feel “holier than thou”. I’m sure a lot of folk better than I have

been incarcerated for long periods in jails all round the earth – there have always been people unjustly imprisoned and I guess there always will be.

Over lunch I asked Bob if his attorney had found out why all this had happened to me. He hesitated and both Clara and he looked uneasy, making me anxious and I demanded an answer. Then they told me it was due to the incredible evil spite of the two servants who'd been sacked by Clara. They knew of my visa lapse, so when they were sacked for stealing they gave the information to the Immigration Department to pay me back for what they saw as my part in their dismissal. That in itself wasn't too big a deal, but their lies were something else. They declared I was an immoral person and had venereal disease. The police couldn't have taken that accusation too seriously, for they didn't insist on an examination, but I did. After I heard this, I insisted on a private Wassermann test by an independent doctor. It was negative of course and I had it sent to be put with the accusation and naturally there were no morals charges.

I looked for those two German sons-of-bitches for quite awhile, but we heard they had taken off for der fatherland – I hope so for they deserved Hitler.

Clara was between pictures so we took off for Malibu. There was no publicity, thank goodness, and I sure needed a holiday. By the weekend Bob had gone back to Beverley to attend to his businesses. I felt much better near the sea – I love it and it always makes me well. Clara, as usual was getting restless and I suggested jokingly that she needed one of her many beaus. Laughing, she threw a small dish of fish, which we'd caught and cleaned that morning, over me. Although I managed to act light hearted and seem recovered from the previous weekend, that trauma was to interfere with my health ever after and I think, changed the whole course of my life. Remembering my strange childhood it is difficult to understand why a comparatively small event should do so, but it did nevertheless.

As a cure for all troubles and woes, Clara arranged a party for the weekend – gaiety and laughter put shadows to flight for both of us. What odds if the bootleggers wares made so much of it possible – wasn't dancing, music and laughter heightened by a few good snorts of gin and orange? Most of the happy crowd from Paramount were there and the party was gay and hectic. After swimming and sunbathing on Saturday morning we had drinks and buffet food in the rumpus room and the drinks kept coming. We played darts and cards, but as usual music and dancing were the most popular activities, except for some of us, booze.

By mid-afternoon I wasn't feeling very well – the liquor seemed to affect me quickly and didn't sit well. Clara suggested I take a rest and a nap so I'd recuperate for the night's activities. I agreed and did doze for a short time, but felt strangely ill. I just couldn't shake it.

Toward evening Clara bounced into the room, saying,

“Up you get; we need you for a ping pong match.”

I sat on the edge of the bed feeling miserable.

“I'll soon fix that,” said the irrepressible Clara and fled through the open door.

I couldn't understand what was happening to me. I'd never had this horrible and frightening feeling from alcohol before. I wish I'd quit while I was ahead, but how do we know? Clara brought me a long, cool Bacardi rum, assuring me it would bring the dead back to life and it did perk me up for awhile, but by early evening I felt so ill I decided to go to Clara's home and call my doctor. Fortunately I had my own car, so I insisted on going alone. I didn't want to put anyone out and was sure Bob would be at home.

As I drove along the Malibu highway, which is a fair haul if you are not enjoying it and I wasn't, the first of what were to be many horrible attacks occurred. I pulled over to the side of the road and slumped behind the wheel, feeling an unpleasant tingling sensation over my body and from my feet upwards, a

gradual creeping paralysis slowly took hold. I felt it around my mouth too, making speech difficult. It was getting worse by the minute and my fear didn't help. Knowing there was a drugstore not far ahead I somehow made it there - thank God the traffic was unlike it is today. I stumbled into the drugstore and with difficulty tried to explain my difficulty. He could see I was ill, but no doubt was suspicious of its cause, for I would have smelled of liquor.

He took me into a small back room and I dropped onto a couch while he snapped out a pencil torch and peered into first one eye, then the other. As he did this the paralysis kept creeping higher. It didn't occur to me at the time, but I guess he was looking for signs of drugtaking. It continues to amuse me to this day when in American television shows and films, regardless of what is wrong, broken bones, cuts or whatever, doctors and paramedics snap out a pencil torch and interminably examine the patient's eyes. I laugh and the whole scene flashes back to that silly druggist doing nothing sensible or helpful, but I was frightened and certainly not laughing then.

After awhile he asked me how much liquor I'd had.

"No more than usual," I replied sarcastically, in spite of myself.

His advice, that I go home to bed and call my doctor, was of little use to me when I was certain I would be unable to manage the drive. I struggled up and glared at him, but realising he was unable to help me, I went out to the car. It was a nightmare journey, with several stops, but thankfully I finally made it.

I called our doctor straight away and he said he'd be right over. (Sounds like something medieval, doesn't it? Imagine calling the dear old family doctor and he comes pounding over in the middle of the night to save your life! In fairness though, I must say I'm still lucky in 1979 - when he isn't away my M.D. does just that, come and save my life in the middle of the night. Good on you, Doctor Carl.) In Beverley Hills in the twenties it was no problem and the doctor came when sent for.

Shaking uncontrollably, I somehow undressed and collapsed into Clara's huge bed. There was the sound of an auto screeching to a stop and sure enough, the first thing the doctor did was get stuck into my eyes with the bloody pencil torch. I would have had several tart words to say about this, but couldn't manage to convey this message. He knew it wasn't booze or drugs and couldn't understand it - that made two of us. Finally he said he'd give me an injection to put me to sleep and rest my nerves. Without either of us knowing it, he had hit on the problem and it was to be a long time before we solved the mystery. It was nerve shock from my traumatic jail experience via the Kraut thieves.²⁸

Next morning, Sunday, the doctor returned. I had slept and certainly felt much better, but still very tired. Thankfully the paralysis and tingling were gone and I could speak properly. He asked me a few questions and I told him of my experience the previous weekend. He then said he was quite sure it was nerve shock, but what neither of us dreamt was the extent and depth of the damage done or that alcohol was now to be pure poison to me for more years than I care to remember. He administered another mild sedative which made me sleep all day so I was okay when Clara returned that night.

Bob had not been home - I have no idea where he was, and was very upset when he returned to find I'd been ill and alone. The only thing which was of any help in stopping the paralysis which plagued me for many years, was a morphine injection. Miraculously I didn't become addicted as many poor souls could have, but the injections always made me nauseous, which I guess saved my hide. I thank God that there is no need for that particular drug in medicine.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Soon after this Clara began making *The Fleet's In*, with James Hall as leading man. The sleek, slim Jack Oakie had a comedy role as a song and dance man. This film went a long way to

furthering his career. It may seem to be a strange situation between two close friends, but I never asked Clara to get me a part in one of her pictures and she never offered to do so. I was being kept happily busy doing quite a bit of singing on radio and as many stage plays as I could. I still had mild dreams of being a fine tragedienne, but I admit, with the passing of time the dreams were fading. I especially asked Clara and some other friends to attend one play as I had a very dramatic part and afterwards they showered me with superlatives - I should be on Broadway, (I thought so too and nearly was later). Clara said I was wasting my time in pictures as the stage was my forte. As usual the next day my "brilliance" was yesterday's news and quickly forgotten, but fortunately for me there were other movie makers in the audience and I did get a number of movie parts following this play which was hopefully titled *Passionate Mary*, a dramatic Tia Juana (or as it is now called Tijuana) brothel piece.

When the play closed Clara and I had some free time so we decided to accept a long standing invitation from Adela Rogers St Johns to spend a weekend on her ranch, which was well out into the country. We were both very fond of Adela who was colourful, witty, clever and very kind. Her ranch had all amenities, tennis courts, swimming pool, horses and riding equipment.

On Saturday night Adela gave a large dinner party at which I was delighted to meet Edmund Lowe and his wife, Lilyan Tashman. I had not met Edmund before, but I knew Victor McLaglen very well and the two with Dolores Del Rio had made a big hit with *What Price Glory*. Dolores sure had forged ahead since that day in 1924 when we had both taken part in the opening of the radio station KNX, "The Voice of Hollywood"! Lilyan was very popular in the movie industry and considered the top "clothes horse" because she looked so good in society pictures. She was very good in "other woman" roles so these were what she played most.



Dolores del Rio



Lilyan Tashman

I took an immediate liking to Eddie Lowe, who was loaded with charm and good humour. We quickly fell into conversation about our mutual friend and Eddie's work mate, Vicky and I told Eddie about our little clique who all loved to go night bathing in the big breakers at Santa Monica. Eddie laughed heartily at my enthusiasm for night picnics and swimming in the "raw" and wished he'd been along. Somehow I don't think Lilyan would have approved.

Lilyan's sudden death in 1934 shocked the industry. There were several women of this period who, like Lilyan, did sterling work in motion pictures, but few ever write of their important work in both silents and talkies. Often they have more than helped the stars make pictures great, women such as Natalie Moorehead, Agnes Moorehead, the lovely Helen Vinson and a dear friend whom I met so often on different sets, Gertrude Astor. There are many others whose faces would have been familiar although their names were not. The same thing applies to numerous actors, although the women were more conspicuous, I think, because of the fashion interest. They tend to identify more in this manner.

It was a lively dinner party and continued quite late. I sat in the kitchen later having an intense conversation with Adela. I was pleased to see her name on a magazine article not too long ago, bless her. It was great to know she is still going. Her own history is very interesting and dramatic. Her father, Earl Rogers, was one of the two greatest criminal lawyers in American history. Adela wrote a book based in his life, called *A Free Soul*, which was made into a talkie picture, starring Norma Shearer, by MGM in 1931.

Mentioning Norma Shearer jogs my memory. I still have a contract signed in 1925 by Louis B. Mayer and myself. L.B. was already president of MGM then and the contract was for a picture which was made under the working title, *Devilkin*, but was released under the title, *He Who Gets Slapped*. My early friend, Lon Chaney snr, played a circus clown and Norma a trapeze artist. I had a number of bits and pieces to do throughout the film, but mainly I doubled for Norma in the long shots and showed her how to get on and off a trapeze and generally handle it professionally in close-ups. She was a very nice person and we got on fine. Canadian born, I believe she started on the New York stage, which was not exactly screaming out for her services, but after having been discovered for pictures and signed by MGM she became very popular, especially with women who admired her smart dressing and cool, ladylike manner.

Irving Thalberg, who later became Norma's husband, was being tutored by Uncle Carl Laemmle when I first went to Universal, but L.B. Mayer, a very smart cookie and the greatest "actor" to ever put foot on the MGM lot, especially when it came to talk money or the renewal of contracts, snapped up young Thalberg and made him a powerful top producer, second only to himself. It was a fast ascent for a young Jewish boy – from a lowly job at Universal to the middle spot in the rating, Mayer, Thalberg and Harry Rapf, the top three in MGM's heyday.

Gossip around the village was that Irving's mother was far from pleased at his marriage to Norma and the only reason

seemed to be that he had married a Goy (non-jew) but fate took a hand by snatching the “golden boy” from this earth in 1936 at the tender age of thirty seven.



Irving Thalberg and Norma Shearer

The third party in the MGM trio, was a man little publicised or known. In all my years from 1924 until I left Hollywood, in and out of MGM almost constantly, I never saw or met Harry Rapf although he was there from the first merger and I heard his name often.

LB Mayer ran a tight ship and built MGM into the greatest motion picture studio of all time simply by surrounding himself with the best possible personnel, star making, and I think above all, by insisting that the end product must be suitable for family viewing and that it be “heart-touching”. Of course his other great accomplishment (according to your view of them) was the introduction of the Oscar Academy Awards, with the help of Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks snr. and others. He really

should have been awarded the first one for his own acting ability, but whatever one thought of the man personally, it must be admitted the “rot” set in when he was ousted and the real charisma of talkies faded away with Louis.



Louis B Mayer

Neither Clara nor I could play tennis, but Adela certainly worked hard that weekend in an effort to teach us. It was a marvellous weekend in beautiful surroundings with a dear hostess and over all too soon. Adela waved us away (as we said so often in the westerns) as the sun sank slowly in the West.... Adela knew Clara had been smitten with the all American Morely Drury, but we didn't find out until shortly after that weekend that Adela had been smitten with Morely's co-star,

Jesse Hibbs. Some time later she married him. I've seen his name as director a few times in early television shows. Our relationship with Adela was strengthened by her brother, Bogart Rogers, taking over Clara's financial affairs, which had been in quite a mess until he straightened them out.

I returned to my room at the Warner Kelton hotel, but not for long. I had kept it on despite being very often at Clara's house, because I still felt I needed time alone occasionally, but Bob was insisting we marry straight away, so I gave in, but an offer of work once more delayed the inevitable.

Monroe Salisbury, our desk clerk, told me to call Ray Taylor, who was directing quickie westerns at Universal. Ray had been Jay Marchant's assistant on the serial which had been my first effort and in which I worked with the strongman Joe Bonomo, of whom I thought very highly. Ray was pleased to hear from me and asked me to join him for coffee at the commissary to discuss a part. He said we would go on location for some chase shots out at the Saugas. Where else except Griffith Park for the westerns in those days? It was no "covered wagon" I can assure you, but a covered wagon was to be my undoing had we but known.

Ray, with a sob in his voice, told me how "bad things were" and begged me to take a cut in salary - there were dreadful rumours that talking pictures were frightening backers and Universal was particularly vulnerable as quickie westerns and serials were its major output, making possible the "front lot colossals". Uncle Carl had them trained well, but as always I wanted work, so I took the fifty dollars a week and we started shooting almost immediately.

I called Bob, who was disappointed to be informed that the splicing (no, not the film, the marriage) had to be put off until after this great epic was finished with me. As usual I haven't the foggiest notion what it was about or called - it wasn't important. But the pursuit of work was constant with Glory back in New Zealand and on the road again with a new show and a new

husband and constantly needing money. I wasn't to know about the new husband for several years – I guess you get the picture.

Universal seemed obsessed with my circus ability far more than with whether or not I could act, which I suppose was reasonable considering the constant need for people to do stunts and unusual things rather than just straight acting at that time. Added to that, not long before International Newsreel had prevailed on me to do a tight rope act out in the open inside a large den of lions. It made newspapers world-wide as well as coast to coast in America and I still have the clippings. It really was quite dangerous as I used a paper umbrella for balance and a sudden gust of wind could mean curtains for it is widely known that anything suddenly falling into or being withdrawn from a wild cat's cage will almost certainly cause them to pounce.



Watch your step, Tui.²⁹

One lion did jump onto the pedestal right beside me and I held that silly paper umbrella between the lion and myself screaming (softly mind you as I had some previous experience with cats) for Murphy, our animal trainer at Universal, to get the beast away from me.

It was unfortunate that the cameraman had already packed up - he missed a whale of a shot, especially as it was for Newsreel. I guess I worked for about half an hour in all that time, for which I received ninety dollars, so it was some cut in salary Ray asked me to take. It was probably the publicity from this stunt that prompted Ray to call me.

Ray informed me he wanted me to do a stunt connected with the small part I was to play. They made some chase shots and then the covered wagon was brought in - I can't remember how many horses it was connected to. Ray instructed the camera man to get inside the wagon to set up for some close-up shots facing the tail board. I was supposed to hang on to the tail board crying suitably for my departing husband or lover who was presumably inside the wagon. We took little notice of the driver - the horses were standing quite still and everything seemed okay, but I had an uneasy feeling that the tail board may be too high for my five foot tall frame. I had to run a fair distance before letting go, however Ray yelled the customary "camera, action" and we were off... at least, they were off... I lay flat on my face on the Saugas sand. The driver had given a bloodcurdling yell like "yippee" or such, while crashing the reins on the horses' backs and wildly flourishing a whip. Naturally the said steeds took off galloping for pastures new and certainly greener. I wasn't hurt and got up, laughing, which Ray was not. He seemed to be reading the riot act to the driver who was looking sullen and crestfallen.

The momentum had taken the wagon quite a way, but when they returned Ray wanted to know "why I hadn't hung on anyway". Mentioning Slim Summerville would be more suitable for the job with his lanky height, I considered doing a crying job on Ray, but thought better of it - he was too much competition.

I just allowed the dam wagon was too high for me, especially going so fast.

“Okay,” said Ray. “We’ll tie your wrists with rope, so the camera won’t pick them up and just do a face close-up.

I agreed and went around to the driver to ask him if he’d mind holding them in from a fast ride. Really we all should have seen it wouldn’t work, but we didn’t. In those days they’d try anything for a sensation, as if they don’t now! They tied my wrists - I was still a bit doubtful, but when the “camera, action” call came, off we went. True, the driver was less flamboyant this time, at the start, but I soon knew it was a losing battle. I tried to “do my stuff” but with speed my feet left the ground. Being tied, I couldn’t let go and was swung from side to side, my leg hitting against the iron-shod wheels. I couldn’t even yell out, but luckily Ray soon saw the position and stopped the driver.

They cut the ropes and I slumped to the ground, with pain in my legs, and my spine between my shoulder blades. Ray was upset and worried about me, although I said I’d try again if he liked. He thanked me but said they could make do with the film they had and, as I didn’t look or feel well, he sent me home in a studio car, saying he’d call me in the morning.

I went straight to bed, but the pains became steadily more intense. At about eight that night I called my doctor who examined my bruised legs and spine and told me I was not to get up and certainly couldn’t return to work the next day. Fortunately I had a reliable daily woman. The next morning I felt awful, barely able to raise my head from the pillow. When Ray called I explained the situation to him and believe me he was worried. He said the wagon driver had been drinking and had been fired, which was fine, but not of much help to me. Ray said he would call me back after he had consulted with the front office.

When he did call back he told me the company doctor would be around to see me. His subsequent examination substantiated what my doctor had told me so he left without treating me.

My doctor, Dr Eisenman, had told me to remain in bed and see nobody but the maid, not even Bob, while we watched the situation closely for a couple of days. I certainly needed the rest aided by the prescribed mild sedation, but regrettably it didn't help much. The weekend found me in a bad mental and physical condition and steadily getting worse. My attorney and the studio, in consultation with the doctor, decided a prolonged rest down at Santa Monica Beach would do wonders, along with gentle osteopathy treatment to my spine.³⁰

The studio agreed to pay all expenses, naturally and although it was many long months before I was well again I didn't sue them. I think, perhaps, I was foolish, but I had a soft spot for Universal and they did everything they could for my comfort, even supplying a nurse-cum-companion, who turned out to be a jolly, fat Irish woman who loved a "drop of the doings".

I still wasn't allowed visitors and Bob called regularly on the phone. The recuperation went slowly because the accident had caused a renewed onslaught of the paralysing turns from which I already suffered, so the old nerves were really getting a bashing. An osteopath came a few times each week, but he couldn't do much about my spine between the shoulders and it still gives me hell occasionally. I was young and anxious to be up and about, so I did my best, towards this end. Several weeks later I was able to totter out onto the lovely warm sand, sunbake and gradually work my way into the beloved sea. I could feel myself improving and begged to be allowed visitors, but to no avail.

A strange and interesting experience happened through my being at the beach at this time so the time wasn't a dead loss. The nurse (Jane) and I fell into the habit of taking short walks along the water's edge as dusk fell each evening. I loved this time of day best and each evening we'd venture a little further - it was simple and good therapy. Our cottage was a brisk walk north of the Santa Monica pier and between, standing aloof, was a large, secluded mysterious mansion. Jane and I often speculated on this dark and brooding house, which looked deserted, but was

not. Occasionally we noticed a stout elderly woman emerge around dusk and stroll in the opposite direction to the course we took.

Inevitably one evening we met, smiled and spoke. We introduced ourselves, the lady saying she was Mrs Hudson and knew who I was. She said she supposed we knew her also, or more especially, her daughter. Our blank stares went unnoticed – we weren't being rude, just mystified and told her we were intrigued by the mystery mansion and its occupant. She said it had belonged to an American tragedian of note, Edwin Thomas Booth (1833-93), but I fear he was noted more as being the brother of Abraham Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth (1839-65). We stared in amazement when she went on to say her daughter was Aimee Semple McPherson of the colossal Angelus Temple complex near Silver Lake Park, a few miles from Hollywood. I had driven past it dozens of times, but taken little notice of it until we were deluged, via the media, with tales of Aimee's miraculous (or more likely incredible) feats.

The Angelus Temple had its own radio station, a fifty piece brass band and printed two newspapers edited by Aimee. She also made broadcasts on the radio station. Her mother, Mrs Hudson, who had recently remarried, was her business manager. Aimee had two children, a couple of husbands, and suitors too numerous to mention, behind her. She had come to Los Angeles, the Mecca of all religious cults, from her native Canada, about six or seven years before I arrived. She and her family had held tent revival meetings, but arrived in Los Angeles with eight dollars – she had set to and raised the money to build the fabulous temple which at that time was worth at least one and a half million dollars, all in less than ten years. She was and is still recognised as the most famous, or infamous woman preacher the world has ever known. She toured the USA, UK and Europe in the manner of great movie stars and was accorded the same adulation. Aimee was a tall, fine-looking figure of a woman, with a strong face, warm brown eyes, and luxurious red hair piled high

on her head above a fine wide forehead which contained a steel-trap mind. Her hypnotic, animal magnetism had to be experienced to be believed.

When I met her mother, familiarly known as Ma Hudson (her husband was referred to as “what a man Hudson” – I’ve no idea why) it was little less than a year after a nation wide hullabaloo about Aimee’s disappearance and subsequent reappearance. Aimee had gone for a swim right there at Santa Monica beach, in broad daylight and disappeared for five weeks. Hundreds of people searched for her, one or two drowning in the process – another jumped off the temple tower. The same day Aimee disappeared, a close friend of hers, Kenneth Ormiston, a technician who attended the radio installed at the temple, went missing also. It became significant later that a couple remarkably resembling these two, rented and occupied a cottage up the Californian coast at Carmel-by-the-sea, a pretty, but very quiet little resort. They purported to be a retiring honeymoon couple named McIntyre. Some weeks later the “McIntyres” left – in fact five weeks later. The varied accounts of what happened are strictly for the mystery movie makers, in fact, downright macabre and far fetched.

The scene now shifts to a small Mexican border town, Agua Prieta, five weeks after the drama began. It was midnight when Aimee staggered to a door crying for help. The tale she told was wild in the extreme. She had been kidnapped, tied and tortured before freeing herself and escaping into the desert hundreds of miles from Los Angeles. She quickly got to a telephone and immediately the news of Aimee’s return was “flashed” everywhere in the world. Her story was so ludicrous, wild and full of holes, only someone very naive would not see through it.

Briefly, she said a man and a woman had called her on the beach, saying they wanted her to visit their dying child. Her companion, Emma Shaffer, sitting up in the high sands sipping orange juice saw none of this, ’tis said. The couple hustled Aimee to their car, chloroformed her and Aimee awoke in a

shack in Mexico in the power of Steve and Rosie, whom Aimee thought were white slavers. They tortured her with a cigar while she was tied up, but one day they left her alone, so she cut her bonds with a jagged can (don't they always in the movies?) and the brave lady staggered out into the desert. After walking fourteen hours she arrived at Agua Prieta.

I won't go into the boring details, the inaccuracies, contradictions and just plain rubbish that Aimee handed out to anybody who would listen, but I really adore the comment made by the then mayor of Agua Prieta,

“I do not wish to say anything against the lady, but I theenk she is a liar!”

I theenk that is wonderfully humorous, however evidence against Aimee was so overwhelming that she was brought to court. Ormiston had disappeared and despite a wide search, wasn't to be found anywhere - his wife was in the process of divorcing him, naming Aimee McPherson in the suit.

Friends in high places didn't desert her, though and the trial was pure farce - evidence went missing both from the court and, if you please, from the jury room. It was thought to have been flushed down the toilet. The judge claimed to have had his life threatened during the hearing, but then admitted to having received a thousand dollars from Aimee, for “legal advice”, before the charges were laid against her. His name was consequently removed from the role of the American Bar Association. Aimee took it all in her stride, fronting up every night to her audience, oh, excuse me - congregation, to the screams of,

“Sister's back, halleluiah, halleluiah....”

And the frenzied mob backed Aimee to the hilt - if anything her following grew, after all, the publicity was world-wide and worth millions.

This all flashed through my mind as I walked on the beach with Aimee's mother that night. As we neared my cottage I asked Mrs Hudson in for a cup of tea. Jane fixed a little supper and we

talked of current affairs. Conversation so far had been light and cheerful, but I had the feeling Mrs Hudson had a lot on her mind – she seemed to be lonely and anxious to confide in someone. It was getting late and Jane suggested I should be thinking of bed and being tired, I agreed. Mrs Hudson rose, thanked me cordially and we walked to the door together. As we stepped outside she came close to me and in a lowered voice, asked if she could see me alone some time soon. I felt the urgency in her and acquiesced, arranging to take her for a drive along Malibu Road the next evening.

I felt sorry for her as the next night she told me that although Aimee had been exonerated, it had upset the family, in particular, Mrs Hudson. She cried, saying it was a relief to be able to unburden her pent-up grief. I told her “any time” if it helped and in the ensuing weeks we took many drives together, always at night so as not to be recognised and I let her talk. She could tell me little I didn’t know for I was an avid newspaper reader. The few things I didn’t know about current events wouldn’t interest anyone today, except to know what the hell really did happen on some occasions! It was nearly time for me to leave Santa Monica and I was almost sorry, although extremely happy my health had improved.

On one of our final drives, Mrs Hudson asked me if I’d ever been to the Angelus Temple.

“Good Lord no. I’m a Catholic, albeit hardly the church’s model one.”

I assured her, though, that I loathed bigotry, believing sincerely in everyone’s right to vote for whom they chose and believe in what religion their conscience dictated. She then asked if I’d like to go to the temple the following night, bringing Jane if she wanted to come. Jane and I went and I’ll never forget the experience. Mrs Hudson came over the next night and we piled into my two-seater Auburn-Cord racer, laughing merrily as we squeezed for room. I was an excellent driver and loved it, but it

was a long drive and we sure were glad to stretch our cramped legs.

My first feeling on entering the temple was of its immense size. The stage, I can only call it that, was huge - it had to be. There were great show business type curtains which could be opened as at a theatre. And microphones were well in evidence, one spotlighted on the simple rostrum from which Aimee usually spoke. The place held thousands of people and believe me, when Aimee did her stuff it was filled to capacity with an overflow outside. They couldn't all see her, but at least could hear that famous voice over the loud speakers, for Ormiston had done his job well.

Also on stage was a huge tank of water. As Mrs Hudson made room for the three of us to sit I asked what the tank was for.

"Oh, it's a swell night for you to have come - Baptismal night is always the most popular," said the proud mother.

She also informed us she must see Aimee before the proceedings began, but would be back soon.

I took this opportunity to look around and take in the almost unbelievable scene. A balcony high above the stage held a choir of about forty men and women, dressed uniformly - in fact a large number of Aimee's devoted followers wore a sort of uniform, a long dark cape over a white dress. There was an abundance of flowers everywhere they could be strewn. Aimee loved to be showered with their petals and often was. Above all this was a huge, coloured, brightly lit picture of "Christ", with the thorn-crowned head seemingly more lowered than usual. The fierce lights made the blood red tears glisten and appear to trickle down the tortured face. Although there were many stained glass windows, the picture seemed absurdly out of place.

I was curious enough to look back, etiquette forgotten, at the sea of strained, sweating faces. I detected a certain fanaticism in many and it frightened me. Galleries ran on endlessly and I realised I had greatly underestimated the number of people. That night there were more than five thousand - it gives me an

uneasy feeling, just remembering the scene. Suddenly a hush fell on the buzzing throng, as if an unseen hand had bade silence. Then emitting a thunderous roar, the huge organ burst forth, deafeningly and as one, the audience rose to its feet. Jane and I followed suit.

The lights dimmed slightly and a powerful spotlight beamed on a tall, brilliant, smiling figure carrying a large sheath of American Beauty roses and a bible. Aimee wore robes similar to those of her followers, except that hers were of the finest fabrics and had huge wing-like sleeves which she used to good effect when preaching and throwing her arms about. The auburn hair was piled high, making her appear even taller and more imposing. The audience shrieked,

“Sister Aimee! Halleluiah! Praise the Lord, halleluiah!” over and over ad nauseam.

Jane and I sat rooted to the spot. Aimee went to the rostrum, made a gesture and a young girl came and took the roses - the lights went up and the evangelist went to work. Her preaching was strictly for immature, insecure minds or morons and I gave it little heed, but her showmanship, about which I know a considerable amount, was without peer.

In a long life I have met hundreds of VIPs in many and varied walks of life and I have yet to meet one, male or female, with the natural hypnotic intense sexual, almost animal magnetism that this near middle-aged woman exuded, apparently with little effort. Her “sermon” was mainly concerned with the vague needs for more money for the temple and quotes from letters written by people miraculously cured (?) of assorted ailments - by Aimee, of course.

While she preached, a dozen or more people were passing plates for money. Aimee had said as the collections started, that she would rather hear the rustle of paper than the tinkle of coins and she did. Mrs Hudson returned and sat with us, whispering that Aimee would like to meet me and would we come round after the service? She had seen us a few times from the windows

of the beach house. I felt a slight shudder pass through me – to this day I don't know if it was a warning, repulsion or fear, but I do know it wasn't pleasure. I mumbled my acceptance. I was curious Aimee consented to meet a few outside people after her wondrous dip in the Pacific and subsequent emergence from the desert.

Seeing that the “handout” was nearly over, Aimee said she was ready for the Baptismal service and for those wishing to be baptised to line up in the aisles... dozens did. Aimee returned wearing an oilskin outfit. Many more such outfits were on the stage and the lines of people donned them as they drew near the tank. “Sister” got into the tank and went through the lot without missing a beat, then it was over to the silver band, fifty of them, who struck up heartily playing *Bringing in the Sheaves*, while a magic lantern showed us coloured slides of the Holy Land, where Aimee retreated to when in the mood.

In an incredibly short time Aimee was back, grinning broadly, every hair in place and ready for more business. She read out a short list of coming events at the temple, then motioning the people to stand, she prayed a short prayer. Without warning, the whole building seemed to rock on its foundations as thousands burst into a hymn, one quite unfamiliar to me. Breathing a sigh of relief as the crowd streamed out, we followed Mrs Hudson around to Aimee's dressing room.

It only needed a star on the door, the rest was there – makeup table, screens, a comfortable chaise-longue, mirrors surrounded with light bulbs, as well as a full length mirror and a very well-used stuffed lounge chair from which Aimee rose, glowing with a wide smile, hands held out to greet us. Mrs Hudson started to introduce me, but her daughter cut her short, saying,

“Mother, I know Tui well by sight and feel I already know her.”

I introduced Jane, who also received the over-powering dazzling smile and greeting. As we sat, Aimee turned to me asking,

“How was I tonight? I thought it went over pretty well?”

I gargled it was “all so much more than I expected”. Oh brother, was it ever! But this answer seemed to satisfy her and she went on to try to quizz me about the Bows and other screen notables. I was extremely cautious in what I revealed but as I was to be married within the month, if nothing else went wrong, I mentioned that. Her extravagant well-wishes embarrassed me, but she was most pleasant. After a while I told her as it was late and we had a long drive, we must go. As we stood to leave, Aimee abruptly bent down and kissed me.

“You are so young and innocent,” she said. For a moment the dazzling smile was gone and her straight features were good to look upon when in repose. I thought for a moment I detected an almost sad and wistful expression.



Aimee Semple McPherson and her mother

I drove home very quickly and fell into bed exhausted - I was almost too tired to undress, so Jane helped. That night I

dreamed fitfully, I seemed to be Alice in Wonderland , but the only other character from Alice was the white rabbit rushing around as usual. He kept looking at his watch and muttering,

“I’m late, I’m late. I’ll lose it all, all, all.”

I kept trying to catch up with him and calling out, but he wouldn’t stop to tell me what he’d lose. I was dreadfully frightened it was his soul.

I took Mrs Hudson for several more drives and she asked me what I thought of her daughter. I evaded some aspects of the question, saying simply that I thought Aimee seemed a strong and forceful character and this seemed to suffice. I told Mrs Hudson I was leaving Santa Monica in less than a week’s time. She was to return to the temple herself shortly as she did most of her business there and her holiday was over. The next evening the phone rang and I recognised the famous voice immediately.

“Hello, dear. It would be wonderful if you’d come over for a while. I was at a party last night and I’m a bit tired if you know what I mean.”

I allowed that I did and would she care for a little refreshment? Ever quick on the uptake, Aimee said she certainly would. We had quite a “getting to know you” evening and I left with a promise to visit her at the temple, so I did go a few times, going to her dressing-room while she put the finishing touches to her make up. She would make a concerted dive at me, always with the same question -

“How’s my make up hon, (or dear, or darling) everything alright?”

I would assure her it was as she already very well knew. Within a year Aimee and her performances began to pall as life changed rapidly for me. I stopped seeing both her and her mother.

This being a true life story, it doesn’t end happily. Some eight to ten years ago I read a short article in a newspaper here in Australia, which contained the information that the great evangelist had retired in 1931. I was surprised, as I was still in

Hollywood then and don't remember knowing or reading about it. The article recorded that her third marriage, to David Hutton, had ended in divorce – another fact I hadn't known. Her health had failed soon after and she lived in retirement until 1944, took an overdose of sleeping pills and died at the age of 54. I still wonder if the white rabbit was too late.

Bob came to Santa Monica to take me home. He had cancelled my rooms at the hotel long since. Herbert drove my car home, where Clara also had insisted I come. It made me happy and I told them so. Clara put on the usual fatted calf bit and life with the Bows began again. The sea, as usual, had worked wonders for me. Clara decided on Palm Springs for that weekend. There was only a small village, but one swanky hotel with bungalows, swimming pool and all the trimmings. Other than that it was just desert and more desert as far as one could see and an Indian reservation which was taboo to whites. The Indians had their own glorious swimming pool – a natural one, filled by a sparkling waterfall tumbling from rocks. The water was so pure and crystal clear you could plainly see the bottom (of the pool, I mean) at its deepest end. The Indians were no snobs and told us we could use their pool whenever we liked and I did in preference to the plush hotel water hole.

We had lots of fun, but the part I loved best was when Herbert drove us home at night, with the stars out in the sky, twinkling lights in the distance and Clara reading the poetry of Lawrence Hope, which we both adored at the time. I still love a few of her poems and we were also fascinated because Lawrence Hope was such a mysterious person.

I had returned after my enforced holiday to find Clara worried about the advent of talkies which were obviously here to stay. Most people were plagued with the same worry. I don't wish to sound immodest, but I have always had a good speaking and singing voice, due to my early training, but Clara, though she had a better voice than many, had an unmistakable Brooklyn twang and asked my help to overcome it. I willingly got to work and the

poetry reading was good exercise for her as well as shortening long trips – we both loved it. Clara was to start another picture, *The Wild Party*, which was part silent and part sound, a method being tried by many to strike a happy medium. Everyone seemed obsessed with the problem, particularly Charlie Chaplin who wouldn't give in for years, until he just had to.

Clara stopped reading so I asked for news about her show. Paramount had brought out a new leading man from the stage in New York city. She told me he was reputed to be a fine actor and she liked him very much, but he didn't really "turn her on". I giggled at that and remarked that he was a bloody lucky guy. She laughed too and we started pushing each other back and forth on the seat. Finally I gasped,

"Okay, I give in. I'm too weak yet to best you. Anyway you're bigger and certainly fatter than I."

At that it was on all over again until I really did get distressed so we sat quietly for a while. How I loved those long night drives, often across the border into Nevada, all fascinating desert then. I hate to think what has happened to it now with atomic tests defacing its natural beauty, ugh!

Continuing about her picture, Clara said the new leading man's name was Fredric March. He was married to a fine Broadway actress, named Florence Eldridge and bore a remarkable resemblance to John Barrymore, but the resemblance was confined to both men's great acting. I was surprised to hear the film was to be directed by a woman, almost unheard of in those days and this particular woman was the only one who ever did have any success as a director in motion pictures. That job was certainly reserved for the esoteric chauvinist male, but Dorothy Arzner gave 'em a go and did a swell job. She was no "new chum" to the business, having been a first class cutter, better known today as a film editor. Most good directors were also splendid cutters.

As I'd been ill and away so long I hadn't met Fredric or Dorothy yet, but when I did I liked them both immensely. What

a warm-natured guy Fredric was and what a “great” he was to become. He died just a while back and his loss will be felt by all movie lovers. Needless to say Clara bitched to me about having a woman director not that she didn’t like Dorothy, on the contrary she thought Dot was great fun, but after all girlfriends like me she could lose, but a gorgeous man was divine and Dorothy was going to make one less man around, however they both survived. I’m not too sure the picture has.

Shortly after our return Clara and I were shopping when we ran into Eddie Goulding on the Boulevard. I was glad to have a chance to thank him, for he always sent me flowers when I was ill. He was his impeccably bland English self. I always thought of Eddie as a dear buddy, although he was “Pecks Bad Boy” and yes, I do know why.

“Tui, dahling did you have any lovely advent....”

“Eddie if you start that rot again I’ll turn you into the Hays office,” I snapped.

“But dear, think of all the opportunities.”

“You think of them,” I snorted.

“Never mind love, good to see you back.”

It’s strange, but I never thought of Eddie as the splendid director, writer and musician he was, he was a beloved friend of long standing and was always the same. Yet in all those years I only worked for him twice - I never asked for more. Later he directed one of the great Bette Davis pictures, a smash hit, the heart breaking *Dark Victory*. I am jumping ahead. Suddenly Clara spoke up,

“Okay Eddie, you said you want us to go to Yosemite Valley - now tell me when?”

Eddie said he was taking a crew and leaving the next day to start the filming of the silent *Rose Marie*, with Joan Crawford, who would be there by the weekend. He repeated his earlier invitation for us to be his guests for that weekend. Neither of us had been to Yosemite, so we said we’d be delighted. He told us there was plenty to amuse us while the company was working

and at night we could have fun. I immediately became suspicious – Clara had not known Eddie as long as I and I felt responsible, as I’d introduced them. I said,

“Fun, yes. Hanky panky, no!”

I saw the gleam in his eyes and had to laugh – I viewed Eddie and John Dekker, the painter, with equal suspicion. Boy, were they tigers with the girls! But this time, as it turned out, I needn’t have worried. As a beautiful girl walked by, Eddie got that glazed look in his eyes, vaguely said “Adie” and promptly followed her. We had to laugh at such obvious devotion to the ladies. Clara said,

“Oh, I forgot to tell you, Tui....”

That figures, I thought, “What?”

“I met one of the top brass in the navy when I was making *The Fleet’s In* and he invited us to dinner on the aircraft carrier, *Saratoga*, next time she’s in. He called and invited us tonight.”

“Oh brother, my hair’s a mess, I’ve nothing to wear,” I wailed, “and now she tells me.”

“Don’t be silly – the damned house is stuffed with clothes. Come on we’ll go home and have a rest. But don’t tell dad where we’re going, you know what he’s like.”

“When sailors are concerned? Not bloody likely – yes, I know what he’s like, but the *Saratoga* and all those planes,” I said, almost rubbing my hands together with glee.

“Yes,” said Clara, with a dreamy expression, “he’s a dreamboat.”

“Who?”

Clara woke up, “Why my lovely navy man, silly!”

“Oh gawd, the air force and now the navy – what next?”

For me the planes were the attraction. I loved flying in those early aviation years and did at every opportunity. We knew Eddie Stinson and he took us up a few times in his lovely five-seater. I even took the controls in the air. Sailors one could always come by, but flying was a bug with me. I had begged Bob to let me learn to fly – I was so good at such things and wouldn’t

take a back seat to any driver in those days – but although he indulged us in many things, he was adamantly against us flying. I wish I had done it anyway – I adored it until the world-shrinking jets took over.

That night we dressed up, a rare thing for both of us. Clara and I both loathed evening wear, but both of us were flushed with excitement and thought it a small price to pay for what promised to be a thrilling evening. No prizes for Clara's thoughts and I could hardly wait to look over an aircraft carrier – to dine on one was the stuff of dreams. We sat demurely in the back while Herbert drove us to San Pedro where the gleaming ship's tender, manned by Clara's handsome officer and another for me, awaited us at the wharf. They helped us aboard and after the introductions were over, we swished out to the carrier, to be individually escorted to all its points of interest. The best part for me was riding the huge elevator to where all the planes were snugly stored away.

After the tour we went back up to the main deck. Liquor was always taboo on American Navy Ships and of course prohibition was still supposed to be in force but a few people just happened to have a silver flask or two, so in a small cosy room we had a few pre-dinner drinks, delicious dry martinis. When dinner was announced we were escorted, by several gallants, to a beautifully set long table. The officers stood until we were seated, then sat down to be introduced. That gal sure did have "it": the expressions on those scrubbed faces was a joy for a woman to behold.

After a superb dinner we went topside for a stroll in the moonlight – the shore lights could be seen for miles. Two of the boys were escorting me and I kept it that way – fine fellows behaving with admirable propriety. Clara was nowhere in sight and neither was her officer, but I knew they wouldn't be far away. About an hour later I began to get uneasy as we had to leave soon and the tender was waiting, so I asked one of the officers with me to find her and let her know – he obeyed instantly. The

nearest I came to a shipboard romance that night was when the remaining fellow suddenly put his arms around me and kissed me wholeheartedly. I was surprised but not upset – when he let go I became all coy and tapped him on the cheek with a small Japanese fan I was carrying. I feel like hooting with laughter when I think of it now – it reminds me vividly of a Chaplin comedy in which the tap would have been returned, only a little harder and likewise until one of us was flattened in a wild brawl. Fortunately for me this didn't happen, as we heard the tinkling of Clara's laughter as she returned.

We tumbled into the tender, calling cheery farewells and thanks to all and sundry. This was my only visit to an American warship, so my heart is sad to think it went to a watery grave in World War Two. It was late, so the officers had to stay on board. An ensign, or something like that, accompanied us to the shore. Faithful Herbert was waiting so it didn't take us long getting home. On the way I hissed into Clara's ear,

“Where the hell were you? Look at the time – I've got an appointment at MGM tomorrow!”

I could see her lovely hair and skin shimmering in the moonlight. I could also see the “cat who got the cream” expression. She started to tell her story, but I cut in,

“No, don't tell me. Why do I ask silly questions?”

“Yes,” said Clara, “Isn't it the truth?”

I was dozing as we neared home, so my disposition wasn't exactly sunny when we got inside to find “daddy” sitting up in the dark, waiting for us like a watch dog.

“Where you bin till this hour?” he started.

Clara just kept on going to her room and bed, lucky dog. Bob moved over near me.

“You needn't try to smell my breath. I've had one or two drinks and it's my business anyhow!”

“Oh yeah, well it'll be mine pretty damn quick. Where were you both?”

“Oh, up at Bea Lillies'.”

“That’s a lie. She’s in New York.” Bob darted down the hall to Clara’s room – I could hear their voices, but not what they said. Soon Bob darted back into the living-room (wherever Bob went he darted).

“I knew it was a lie. Clara said you were round at Joan Crawford’s place.”

I laughed out loud – that really WAS funny, “What, with Herbert driving us? Why don’t you run around and ask Joan?”

He started towards the door, I was still giggling – poor Joan, if we’d visited her as often as we told Bob we did, we’d have had to pay board. Suddenly I was tired of it all,

“Oh, go to bed Bob; and shut up, the wedding’s off.” And I sauntered off to bed.

Bob was screeching like a banshee, demanding to know why we couldn’t act like Lillian Gish.

“I dunno,” I said. “Nobody has asked me to yet.”

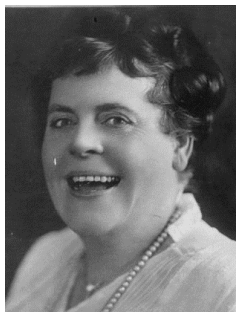
“You know very well what I mean – not acting – her manner, so sweet and pure.”

That was my Bob alright; he constantly read those awful paperback Westerns. In his fantasies he was always the manly hero, riding off into the sunset with his pure virginal bride by his side. I’d pegged this little fantasy of Bob’s long ago – youth being thoughtless, I thought it was funny. Bob was short, rather swarthy and inclined to be abrupt and cocky – definitely not the hero type! But as men go, he was the kind sort and never cruel in any way. Bob’s heroes always treated all women as virginal beauty personified. I wonder if he’d found any like that in Hollywood then. I didn’t know of any. Anyway, to shut him up I told him I didn’t want to be his virgin anything. I’d rather be Elinor Glyn or Theda Bara, they always got a tiger or leopard skin to lie on; after all what did a virgin get anyway? This set Bob to thinking, something he didn’t do often and it always took a long time, so I went to bed in peace and passed out.

Next morning breakfast coffee was gulped in pregnant silence. Not being the heroine type I dashed for my two-seater

and whizzed out of the driveway, closely followed by Clara. I headed for MGM and she went the opposite direction, to Paramount. Bob continued ranting until we were out of sight. I spent most of the day with friends at Metro, Woody Van Dyke told me he had a number of pictures lined up and he'd sure keep me in mind, and he did. I saw several of the girls and some I didn't know. Louis B. Mayer was by now slowly but surely building his famous stable of stars. Marie Dressler, a clever character actress, was chatting to Polly Moran, with whom she had teamed for a comedy series. I loved Marie, but Polly was something else again.

Patricia Daly, a dear friend who was a marvellous dancer and performer who never had a real chance, and I went to the commissary for coffee. (Last I heard of Pat she was married to a cameraman, Paul Vogel). In the inner sanctum, Gilbert was mooning over Garbo with cow eyes. Lewis Stone sat by himself, as usual, deep in thought. MGM were signing him to a long contract - he was an admired and respected actor. Pat introduced me to another friend of hers that day, Wallace Beery, he seemed a quiet, well-spoken man, if rather withdrawn. He asked us to have coffee with him and before long he and I were immersed in a nostalgic conversation about circus life. He'd been an elephant trainer.



Marie Dressler



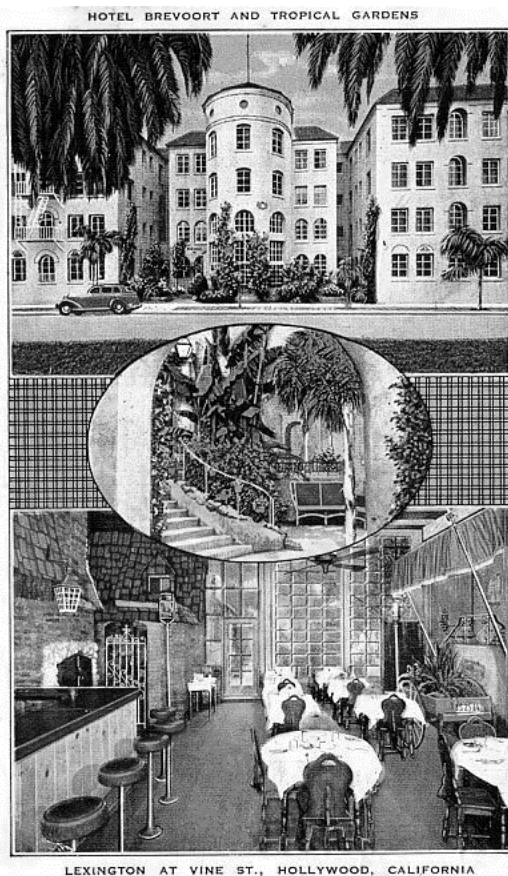
Polly Moran



Wallace Beery

Another old timer who was a close friend of Pat's was the one and only Schnozzle Durante. Jimmy is a much loved character and rightly so. I certainly loved him. He was a kind man, especially to those in trouble. I enjoyed my day at MGM; I loved the place and can't believe it's gone.

A few days previously I'd again rented a room at my old favorite spot, the Warner-Kelton.



LEXINGTON AT VINE ST., HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

The Warner-Kelton hotel became the Hotel Brevoort.

It was central, homey, quiet and a “picture people” spot. Being well known there helped, as I could have privacy if I wished it. After dropping Pat back at Hollywood, I parked opposite the hotel and stayed there the night, retiring early for a rest and some heavy thinking. I felt I needed to be alone for a while. The weekend was drawing near, which meant Clara and I were off to Yosemite, but of greater importance was my impending marriage to Bob Bow. I still felt undecided and uneasy about it, yet I’d given my word and was fond of him. My only doubt was whether fondness and a kind of father-love was enough for marriage. Glory still wrote frequently wanting to know when I was going to be married and if I wasn’t, why didn’t I come home? What home, I thought. She’d finally divorced Queensland Harry, a bit late to have saved the expense and trouble of her trip to America. But also at that time I felt Hollywood was my home and would be forever. I felt that come what may, I’d never leave. I finally did leave, but only after travelling the Pacific, back and forth, nearly a dozen times, per ship.

That night sitting alone in the hotel room thinking, I remembered all the wonderful people I’d met and the almost continuous excitement... the thrill of performing in front of the cameras, the big opening nights, the floating feeling of being stared at, the envy of women who seemed less fortunate, the desire of men who could only feel frustrated – heady stuff? You bet your bottom dollar. Time seemed to be flying now, things happening so fast they were forgotten the next day, or so it seemed. Was it nearly a year since Texas Guinan had returned to Hollywood to make a picture at Warners and invited me to be in her party at the Warner brothers’ Theatre, on Hollywood Boulevard, to see and hear Al Jolson sing at the premier of *The Jazz Singer*? (That film really set off the spark which blazed the trail for all-talkie films.) Sure it was and I’d better get cracking a bit more on my own career. The Bow social scene was pretty demanding on my time, but then, I felt I owed them.

Nevertheless I made a decision to be more aggressive about it and do something. It had been agreed between Bob and I that I'd keep on working, so I must hop to it.

Thinking of Texas Guinan brought to mind a swarthy little "snake hip" dancer she had brought out west with her - George Raft. He had worked in her club back east. She got him a part in her picture at Warners, which led to a gangster part flipping a coin, in Paul Muni's flick of Al Capone. Raft was right for those parts in more ways than one, but went on to star in quite a few pictures. Mr Raft is far from my favorite character from the Hollywood years. Why? Should he read this it might jog his memory of me and a pawn shop in downtown LA. Then he'll understand.

I gazed from my front windows to the familiar sight of darkening shadows on the Hollywood foothills and the imposing Hollywoodland sign. I shivered slightly as I glanced across the street at my smart roadster in the dusty parking lot. I have never liked that time of day; already time was getting too short. I watched the lights begin to flicker on, then, as though I'd never seen the place before, I noticed how very much it had grown. Gone was the corner drugstore on Vine and Hollywood - high rise buildings were mushrooming everywhere. Gone were the dusty back streets, with the familiar lines of pepper trees, the familiarity of every face, the feeling of security. The Boulevards looked narrower, the crowds larger and more aggressive - people in them no longer looked your way and smiled. Again I shivered, the times were certainly changing. Suddenly I felt lonely and a little afraid for no reason I could distinguish. I went to the telephone and called the Bows' house. I was glad it was Bob who answered. He wanted to come right over when I told him where I was and why, but I declined, saying I felt better now that I'd spoken to him, would have an early night and come home before noon.

I slept well and the next morning I had a caller, I've forgotten her real name, but her professional name was Helen (Cupid)



Helen Ainsworth

Ainsworth - a fat and very funny comedienne. She'd lived in the hotel for years and I'd attended a few parties in her rooms, getting to know her quite well. Her sense of humour was as enormous as herself and together we were real shockers. We played the most awful practical jokes on some of our fellow guests, especially those we thought stuffy or humourless. Of course we had a "hide", but most young people do. We didn't give a damn and went blissfully on our stupid way.

Helen really wasn't Stupid Cupid, in fact she was pretty bright and for many years, probably she still is, a very successful "ten percenter", in other words, Actors Agent. I read that she was Marilyn Monroe's first agent, but that didn't last long - I guess Helen will still be regretting that error of judgment. Her folks were wealthy San Francisco people, hence the name change. She was just one of many colourful people on the Hollywood scene.

Helen had called in to say hello, dish up any dirt of interest and pick up any colourful news going. She also asked if I was going to Mines Field that night; she was quite excited, for Helen.

"Mines Field," I hooted, "What the hell for?" My turn to be nosey now. I knew this gal had something up her sleeve.

“Ah!” said Helen, “I thought so, don’t you ever read the papers?”

“Sarcasm doesn’t suit fat comediennes,” I retorted unkindly. “Come on, what’s doing at Mines Field of all places?” I was suspicious and showed it.

“Tui, you are a dingaling. The big Zeppelin is landing there. A gang of us are going – want to come?”

“Hell no,” I said, cringing and backing off, pretending fear. “Fancy all your relatives having to hire a dirigible to come visit you!”

Helen grinned and threw a cushion at me. She didn’t seem to mind jokes about her fat and, of course, used them as part of her act, as did the grand Sophie Tucker.

Seriously I knew nothing about a Zeppelin coming, nor had I ever seen one outside of the newsreels. All Hollywoodites were used to seeing the Good Year blimp round the district continuously and took no notice, but it was far from the proportions of a dirigible. I really was excited when told it was the German Graf Zeppelin calling in on its incredible circumnavigation of the globe; it was the first dirigible to do so. For those interested in statistics, the Graf had been completed in September, 1928 and lasted until 1939, flew more than a million miles in 590 flights, including 144 ocean crossings. She carried 13,110 passengers and 235,300 pounds of mail. Keeping in mind the early demise of most of the other dirigibles, this was a great triumph for the Graf and her captain, Hugo Eckener, a charming man with a very cute beard.

I thanked Helen for her information and practically pushed her out of the room, because suddenly I was going to be very busy. I called Bob, but Clara told me he was out, she didn’t know where, and wanted to know when the blazes I was coming home. I told her what was happening and asked her if she wanted to see the airship. She declined, saying she was starting a new flick, *Rough House Rosie*; and had to dine with her new leading man, and she wished I’d get home as the weekend at Yosemite was

looming. I said it was okay and I'd probably be home the next day.

Suddenly I had an inspiration - I called my ice man, the one with the twelve seater aeroplane and found to my delight that he was going with a couple of friends and what's more, they had invitations to go aboard the Graf. They were all flyers, which helped as invitations were rare and extremely hard to come by. He said he'd be happy to pick me up at about eight that evening. He also told me to go atop the hotel a little after dusk and I would be able to see the Graf pass over. I did and, oh boy, what a wonderful sight! She flew as low as the law allowed, her gondola aglow and we could even get occasional glimpses of movements at the windows. Naturally she looked huge in comparison to our little Good Year blimp.

The boys picked me up as promised - their names are not important to the story, but that night all our names were nearly flashed around the world and the "news" would not have been joyous. Mines Field was several miles from Hollywood over the Baldwin Hills, past Inglewood toward the ocean - it was a far cry from the Los Angeles International Airport which is now on that spot. The field was a busy spot, strung completely around with thousands of red light bulbs. As we drew near we could see the dirigible dwarfing the field and the milling crowds. Seen at close quarters it seemed endless, reaching to the sky, with its nose clamped to a storeys high anchor structure. It was a fantastic sight and one of the rarest I've seen.

Rarer still was the experience of being allowed to board her, enjoy the luxurious interior and meet her captain. Captain Eckener spoke with my aviator friends, greeted me courteously and sent for refreshments. After about half an hour it was time to leave; we thanked our host and reluctantly descended the ladder gangway. The crowd had grown and now numbered several thousand, all excitedly watching the crew busily releasing all the moorings, in preparation for their departure. Finally all except those securing the nose were free and that too was freed

at the captain's signal. We started to cheer and wave farewell, when all at once a sudden unexpected down draught caused the nose to tilt forward toward the ground. The crowd froze for a second, then with a roar, we flattened ourselves, almost as one body, frantically trying to burrow into mother earth. Then the airship's nose suddenly ascended again, it missed the high tension electric wiring, which surrounded the field, by mere inches, the exact distance between hundreds of us and death. If the nose had touched that wire I and hundreds of others would not have lived to tell the tale.

She was away free and safe now, so to relieve our pent up feelings we cheered ourselves hoarse. I had received such a fright I was silent most of the trip home, while the flyers animatedly discussed the possible reason for why and how it happened. I never again saw a dirigible, but given the opportunity it was a sight I'd hate to have missed.

That night I had a strange dream - I was a little girl again, bare foot and out in the frosty paddocks beneath the towering Southern Alps of New Zealand before dawn, gathering those appetising mushrooms for breakfast. Seeing a cluster of the luscious edibles, I ran towards the largest one, but I seemed to be running in slow motion. As I drew near I heard a tremendous explosion and the mushroom grew to unbelievable proportions, towering above me until I was enveloped in a cloud-like mist. I was lost and couldn't see the mushrooms or even where I was, just the snowy peak of Mount Cook, or could it have been Fujiyama? When I awoke next morning I was shivering - the dream had seemed so real and frightening. Giving myself a shake, I thought "What rot!" and promptly forgot it, that is for about twenty years.

As I reached the Bow's house next morning, Clara was driving out as I drove in - we compromised... I kept driving in. Clara was shrieking as she madly backed up. She well knew my front bumper and my nasty tricks with it - it belonged to a bull dozer and for that matter, so did I. As we stopped Clara flew out

of her car -and made a dive at me. Boy, was she mad! I simply got over as far as I could to the other side of my car out of immediate danger, while she used a number of unprintable words.

“Well,” she glowered at me, calming slightly. “I heard it on the radio. You nearly got yourself blown to hell by that oversize gas bag you were so anxious to see. Wait till dad catches up with you. Fine friend you are. You’re supposed to be giving me voice lessons.”

“Hah, hah! I thought you had a date with your new leading man. You want me to give you lessons to the tune of you in your vamp act and his panting - and I don’t mean trousers.”

“I didn’t see him,” Clara changed her mood hastily. Her face was as flushed as her red hair. It was indeed a rare event for a man to stand HER up. Grinning I drove around and parked.

“Move over. I’ll come to the studio with you and we can have a little talk on the way.”

Smiling now, she put the chow dog out of his seat. His coat matched her hair, and she knew this of course. I for one, didn’t let her forget it. I told her it was so confusing - I often couldn’t tell if she was driving the car or the dog.

When we arrived Clara said she had to go see B.P. (her producer, Schulberg), so I sauntered around the lot, stopping for a while to chat to Coop and Bill Powell. I ran into Clara again and naturally she had a handsome man in tow. She introduced him as Clive Brook, who later was to be her leading man in a talkie picture about Hawaii, *Hula*. Clive was rather a cool cat but full of charm and he took us to lunch. The meal was a continuing parade of the studio characters. Pola Negri sailed by, Ben and Bebe Lyon yelled a warm “hello”, the pixie, Bill Wellman was telling jokes as usual (boy could he tell a dirty yarn with style) to the uproarious laughter of his friends. Hedda Hopper swished over to gush over Clara and Clive and look down her nose at me. That was probably my fault as I couldn’t take my eyes of some thing she had on her head. Was it a flower basket, a pot, or...

then I almost yelled. It was a pot, but not a flower pot. This one had a handle on the side – the whole trimmed thing was a pot of the kind you put under the bed at night. I saw a book once, which featured Hedda’s little bits and pieces. In that she wore a telephone and a typewriter as a hat, so why be surprised at a nice old pee-pot?

Clara was grinning but Clive just looked disapproving. I can’t imagine why – he was very English and weren’t all English Queens, including Queen Mary, renowned for their head gear? Clive was a nice chap, but a bit stuffy for our flighty tastes; that didn’t make Clive wrong, of course. Pola was finished slurping her lunch and came sizzling by, darts and arrows flying at us from her lovely light slanting eyes. I thought of her at Rudolph Valentino’s funeral, widow’s weeds ’n all and laughed out loud, but refrained from telling the curious Clara and Clive why.



Hedda Hopper, gossip columnist



Clive Brook

Clara had forgotten to tell B.P. she'd be away for a few days. So, after thanking and saying goodbye to Clive, we started up the stairs. Just then I noticed one of my favourite guys approaching the bottom step.

"Nils," I cried. "My darling Nils."

My hand rested on the banister and Nils Asther put his hand over it, leaned down and kissed me. He always did that when we met, much to my delight. I was on the second step, but he still had to bend over slightly to kiss me. Clara waved from above and disappeared into the "holy of holies". I hadn't seen Nils for some time, probably as far back as the party given for the Duncan sisters, soon after he had been brought out from Sweden to be their leading man in *Topsy and Eva*. He kept his hand over mine, smiled his wicked smile and in fascinating broken English said,

"My darling Tui, is gud to see you. You look happy - is nice eh? This lovely friendship?" he nodded to where Clara had been, "with Clara - is nice, I like." And all the while with that knowing, wicked grin.

I flushed to the dark roots of my blonde hair.

"Nils, if I didn't love you so much I'd smack your gorgeous face. But me, I'm tolerant of all that hanky panky. But I wouldn't say that to Clara if I were you. She adores men only, especially romantic lovers - I could have sworn you knew that - heterosexual to the core, you know, *It* and all that jazz?"

Poor Nils, I'd lost him completely - he did have trouble with his English. He was a dear man and we always remained good friends, but he was so damned beautiful!

At home that night I had to face the music with Bob and he laid down an ultimatum - after Yosemite, marriage and settling down. I bristled. An ultimatum was a dangerous procedure with the wilful young Tui Lorraine, but I looked at Bob and had a pang of conscience - he did look tired and certainly frustrated. I'm afraid Clara and I together were rather a handful for a middle-aged man to handle, spry as he certainly was. He must

have been worn out by his espionage activities (of which I was fully aware, my rear-view mirror proving it often). I kissed him goodnight vowing to take the vows with him forthwith.

That night I dreamed I was swimming in the Pacific, trying to swim south, far south. But I couldn't. I was bound with chains, struggling to get free and seemed to be sinking. I could see Glory beckoning to me and I was trying to hurry but the Pacific and the chains were too much for me. Next day my mail contained three letters from Glory, thanking me for things I'd sent and asking if I could spare any more money. "Things" were bad in showbiz down under. "Things" were getting slightly bad where we were too, but it is hard to tell that to people ten thousand miles away, so I mailed a twenty right away - this was about twelve pounds in New Zealand and would help quite a bit.

Clara told me a journalist from one of London's biggest papers was being sent by Paramount to interview her that morning at about 11. At precisely 11 a.m. I opened the door to admit a fresh faced, slightly balding young man named Cedric Belfrage. Neither of us knew it then, but later we were to be very dear friends and he has remained that in my heart all these years. During the interview I went away and wrote some letters and later Clara, Cedric and I had lunch together before he left. I was not to see him again for a few years.

At last the weekend arrived and we were on our way to Yosemite, hundreds of fascinating miles inland. The highway took us through Palmdale, skirting the Mojave desert to Bakersfield. We branched off there to take a look at the national park containing the great redwood trees. I've seen glorious trees, (I'm a nut about them and can't bear to see one cut down) many of them in New Zealand and also in other lands, but never have I seen a more awe-inspiring sight than those giant Sequoias - overpowering in their ageless grandeur. All those years ago the tourist trade was negligible and such sights were in their natural state. We spent some time gasping at the sight of such beauty and then continued our journey to Fresno. The ever changing

countryside amazed me – desert timber and even a far-off glimpse of Mount Whitney in the Sierra Nevada Range. I gloried in it. We passed small ghost towns where someone had possibly found one gold nugget, starting a gold stampede which soon withered and died, leaving many broken hearts.

The highway took us to Merced, after which we turned east again, heading towards Yosemite National Park, which is in the long Sierra Nevada Range. We were inland not too far from the Nevada border. Lake Tahoe, considerably further north, cuts the border in half – one bit in California, the other in Nevada. As the valley unfolded before us, enchantment set in; we were silent, mentally bathing in the exquisite surroundings. All manner of little creatures danced about and we even saw the rear end of a large black bear disappearing into the cover of enormous trees. Yosemite is also noted for its very large trees.

Approaching the big hotel, the only building there then, I saw no village or houses – it was very rustic and extremely beautiful. The hotel had an Indian name – I have no idea how to spell it, but phonetically it sounds like Ahwanee. It was very grand and we certainly wouldn't have to “rough it”. We had arrived in time to shower, rest a little and dress for dinner. Eddie Goulding met us and escorted us to our suite, which was large, faced glorious views and had a private balcony. Eddie hugged us and started the old refrain,

“Have you – ?”

“Out,” I yelled. “O.U.T !”

Eddie, grinning all over his handsome cheeky face, made for the door, saying he'd be back when we were ready.

After a refreshing needlepoint shower, a change of clothes and makeup, we phoned Eddie, who wasted no time in bringing us some delicious cocktails, to which we certainly did justice after such a long, dusty journey. Eddie brought George Cooper, a well-known character actor, in with him. George was in the *Rose Marie* cast with Joan Crawford. We asked about Joan, but she didn't seem to be around.

Dark sets in early in a gorge and Yosemite was no exception. It is unique, the only place of its kind in the world, shut in by precipitous cliffs which rise from three to five thousand feet along one side. Most of the other sides also rise steeply, but were climbable and covered with all manner of fantastic trees giving accommodation and food supplies to countless types of wildlife. Topping this incredible beauty was a three-tiered waterfall. A cataract above gaily splashes the upper fall 1436 feet to the middle tier, which nudges the crystal flow 626 feet to the lower fall, 400 feet from the ground level. Through this “garden of Eden” gorge, the Merced River winds – it would have been easy to believe this spot was indeed the garden of Eden. That wedding cake waterfall was the most beautiful I’ve ever seen and I’ve viewed a great number. Now for the pièce de resistance.

We’d finished our second cocktail, when Eddie looked at his watch and rose quickly saying,

“Come on, it’s time.”

I also rose quickly, screeching, “Time for what?”

It could have been a Lucille Ball reaction and I guess, was pretty funny. Eddie roared with laughter,

“Why Tui, I’ve known you all these years, even taken you home to mother, and yet you’re so suspicious of me.”

“You bet I am and how come, knowing me all these years you don’t spell my name properly – Tooie, phooey.”

Clara cut in, “Oh, shut up you two,” oozing sex appeal like French perfume, she fluttered her eyelashes at Eddie, on whom, I might add, she had a crush for the moment, “Okay, I’m ready. What’s up?”

With an air of mystery, Eddie took her arm and started for the door. I followed and so did George, the silent one. We were steered to the large rustic log balcony which faced a perfect view of the sheer drop of the stark towering cliffs. Eddie told us to watch the top of the cliffs. It was a clear, star-studded night and the hotel lights above us went out as a faint glow started atop the heights, breaking quickly into a huge fire. Eerily in the dark

stillness a female voice rose high and pure, singing the Indian Love Call, while above, the Indians pushed the burning logs over the sheer drop, making the famous “fire fall”. I thought I must be dreaming – so much beauty was hard to endure and I felt soft tears on my cheeks. I didn’t know George Cooper well, but I knew Clara and Eddie would both feel as moved as I.

The lights came on again and four sighs were audible as we slowly went inside to dinner, again enquiring about Joan. It seemed that she was otherwise engaged, dog tired, I begged off early and went to bed to sleep deeply. I dreamed – I nearly always do – I thought the whole sky was ablaze, not with falling fire, but with rockets, stories high and filled with weird people wearing strange head gear and clothes. You couldn’t see any part of their bodies, perhaps from another planet. I dreamed and was afraid. The rockets took off up and away into space, not down like the lovely fire fall. I thought of the dream as I awoke. “Good God,” I muttered, “The ridiculous things I dream, space men, rockets stories high, blazing in the sky, tch tch!”

“Whaszat?” Clara mumbled drowsily.

“Oh nothing. I’ll have to take more water with it,” I said wryly and thought, *Buck Roger s in the Twentieth Century* is a piker compared to that dream. Did I think I’d ever live to see it come true? Don’t be silly, of course not.

Clara called down to the kitchen to have breakfast sent up. Eddie had left a message to say he would be with us for dinner and a small party afterwards. They were “shooting” quite near, but Eddie knew we hadn’t come from Hollywood to watch movie-making. We dressed in hiking gear, high laced-up boots, trousers and warm sweaters. Believe me, someone “up there” liked us – before the day was ended I, for one, was sure glad to have those boots and warm, tough clothing. Clara had said,

“We’ll take a couple of sandwiches for lunch and go on a long hike, way up to those big trees. I can see a long building not too far up there – we’ll make for it first, see what it is and then continue up.”

We carried a knapsack for the necessities, like a huge pocket knife and of course, a bottle of gin. It was about 10.30 a.m. when we started out on what I thought was going to be a quiet little hiking expedition. After a couple of short snorts we happily wended our way up, following the road, enjoying the brisk air, the magnificent bright sunlight and Yosemite in all its glory. We'd gone a fair way when we arrived at a small country bridge under which bounced a gurgling stream.

"Don't know about you," Clara grumbled, "But I'd like to sit awhile and a drop of gin would help."

I agreed heartily - fundamentally I am really an agreeable soul, loving to keep happiness and harmony going. Of course there are a number of people who would disagree quite emphatically with this, but of course on this occasion the gin was an added incentive to agree with Clara's suggestion and I do, like most Librans, love nature. Glancing at my watch, I exclaimed,

"Hey, it's lunchtime already. Let's have a snack."

Clara got the gin out first - we were on holidays and hiking is a thirsty job, so a slug of gin with pure sweet water was tempting. After a couple of sizeable sips we nibbled on a sandwich without much enthusiasm, feeding most of it to the wee chipmunks, squirrels and birds. After "one for the road" we were not feeling much pain and in high spirits. We made the track through the trees to the building Clara had mentioned earlier. Now and then I slipped on the pine needles and sloping steep ground (I've always had weak eyesight and often miss detail, but I've always managed to see what I want to). Clara, helping me up, sometimes slipped too and we lay there laughing our heads off. The gin was a great catalyst to all this good humour. We were soon at the building, but saw no sign of life. The door was open so we went in and a man appeared from the interior. We called a cheery "hello" in unison and introduced ourselves.

The middle-aged wiry looking man said his name was Joe and he belonged to the fisheries department, working alone to breed trout which, in due course, would end up on our tables. He

seemed to be glad of some company and most friendly, taking us to view a seemingly endless line of tanks holding fish in various stages of growth. We offered him a gin and he was very polite, but said he didn't drink thank you. People who didn't drink were somewhat foreign to us, but we guessed there must be some like that around. We spent a pleasant hour or two, tickling the little trout tummies - we used to do that in New Zealand to catch them.

By the time we were again outside the light was already failing. Joe advised us to wander on down to the hotel, as darkness would come suddenly and to be lost in it was dangerous. We thanked him and left, but not for the hotel, yet. Clara said,

"We're going up to those big trees first. That's where I started for and that's where we're going."

I laughed, but when I looked up the steep slope I became doubtful - those trees seemed as far away as they had been when we started. The level was rapidly dropping in the gin bottle, but we had a nip and scrambled up the slope, moving deeper into the forest. I was now completely lost, slightly muzzy and getting tired.

"I think we'd better get back," I said.

"Not until we're nearer the top," Clara replied obstinately.

"We're lost," I wailed.

"You're damn right," she grinned. "Think of the fun we'll have when they come looking for us."

"What!" I shrieked. "You planned this mess all along?"

"Not exactly," smirked my mad red-headed friend. "But it helps."

I groaned and slipped to the ground. The sun had faded and a sort of twilight filtered through the trees. I knew darkness was near and so was sobriety. Clara planted herself beside me saying,

"Don't worry, they'll find us. I want to see if Eddie will worry about me."

This time I really screamed, "Why you son-of-a-bitch, you got us lost up here, the dump is crawling with wild cats, coyotes

and huge black bears trailing cubs galore and you want to see if Eddie is worried about you? If I live through this I'll murder the goddam two of you."

Clara was rolling among the pine needles laughing fit to kill. I just moaned and glared at the empty gin bottle.

"Serves me right," I muttered, "Glory's sister wanted me to go to London - Bea says they're civilised over there. Hollywood, nutty bloody film stars, now I'm lost with one and who knows what other wild animals."

Clara couldn't seem to stop laughing - it was funny I guess, but not until much later and it was to get worse. Full darkness descended and we tried to emulate it down the mountain. Clara was much more subdued now. I held her arm as I kept bashing into trees - they were very thick and so was the foliage. Poor eyesight or not, I knew they were home to lots of wild creatures and I was scared. All the gleaming little eyes showed clearly in the dark and my terror grew as I thought of the many cougars, pumas, panthers - they are all the same no matter what they're called - all prepared to be lethal if disturbed. Whenever I brushed against anything soft I let out an involuntary squeal, sure I'd been grabbed by a bear the size of an elephant.

Clara kept assuring me we would be found soon, but I detected just a hint of worry in her voice. Half slipping, half walking, we were just reaching a less steep grade when I felt something wind round one of my legs. I let out an ear-piercing scream. Clara disentangled herself from my frantic clutches, the better to jump ten feet into the air.

"What the goddam hell's the matter with you. I thought you were supposed to be so bloody brave!"

My fear wasted no time in spreading to Clara, but it just made her sound more truculent.

"Snake," I said.

"Snake," echoed Clara.

"Yes, there's one wrapped around my leg," I croaked, too scared to move.

After a moment's hesitation, she was down on her hands and knees feeling around my feet. Loud laughter from ground level unfroze my limbs.

"It's only a piece of vine, I can feel the runners on the ground - wait, I'll help get it off. Silly ass, your boots would have stopped a bite."

"Says you," I said, helping to get it clear, then, with a sigh worth a thousand words I squatted on the ground.

So did Clara, but only because I wouldn't move. We were much closer to the bottom now and, saints be praised, I saw moving lights. I scrambled up preparing to yell my lungs out when Clara pulled me down again. I started to tell her help was near, but,

"I know, I can see the car lights. We know where the road is now, so be quiet and listen."

"Are you raving mad!" I gasped in her general direction. "It's miles to the hotel - you're going to catch it from the studio, up and down."

"I know, but I've been thinking."

"That's what I'm afraid of - your thinking usually ends up with me being in trouble," I said sarcastically.

"No, I've got a plan and you must help me."

"Oh, fine and who is going to help me?" I was still squeaking, all that fear had done something to my voice.

"You'll be okay. Just do as I say, alright?"

I muttered, "I've no damn alternative."

She hoisted me to my feet and we made our way down to where the little stream was.

"This goes right down to the hotel - we'll follow it, staying this side. The trees will hide us from sight."

I knew something diabolical was boiling in that famous head, but had no idea what - I asked,

"Well when we get near the place we'll wet ourselves at the stream, daub ourselves with a little mud and I'll faint at Eddie's feet."

I won't wait, I thought. I'll do her in now - nobody could possibly blame me.

"You silly bastard," I yelled, "Nobody in their right mind would believe it. How come I'm not fainting too?"

"You can if you like, but I want to impress Eddie and stop yelling, we can't be far off now, so go quietly."

Her words were confirmed by a faint glow visible ahead. (I think it's only fair to swear that all this really happened and in exactly this way - perhaps my language was a little more colourful at times -). A little glade opened up on either side of the stream, which we crossed on stepping stones to get nearer the road, away from the river. About to step into the clearing, we froze - there, not more than twenty-five feet from us was the biggest black bear I've ever seen in the flesh and there were two cubs with it. It was as well we froze - luckily the mama bear didn't get our scent and after a few more slurps of water the three ambled away to the other side and up the slope.

"You don't have to faint, Clara," I gulped, "I'm going to. And flopped on the grass.

As Clara helped me to my feet and I could feel her hand shaking ever so slightly, my relief was short-lived.

"Isn't that wonderful!" said the crazy Clara. "That's given me a great idea - listen to this now."

At that moment I'd just as soon have joined the bears and gone looking for Goldilocks.

"Oh Gawd," was all I could croak. I felt the gloom inside and out.

"Come on, splash water all over yourself," Clara said as she sloshed heartily into the stream, smearing mud and water over her face and clothing.

"I don't want to. You're bananas - suppose someone other than Eddie sees us?" I moaned.

"They won't, we'll sneak in the side door - it's quite near the suite," Clara soothed.

"Oh hell: I wish I was home."

“Oh, shut up,” Clara snapped impatiently. “Here, I’ll do your make up.” She tittered as she splashed water and mud all over me.

I really wanted to cry, but I was too mad for that. I gasped as the cold water hit me and we both shivered as we ascended the few steps – my shivering wasn’t all from the cold either. As I got there, Clara was slowly and carefully opening the door a crack. As she did, we saw a very worried looking Eddie Goulding hurrying along the corridor. Clara listened for a second, then grabbed me by the arm and pulled me inside with her. We made a dash for our door and dived inside. Clara looked dangerously purposeful as she closed the door.

“What now,” I wailed.

She told me to listen carefully and follow her instructions explicitly.

“Follow me,” she said.

“Yeah, look where it’s got us so far, we’ll end up in jail!” I whinged.

“So what – you should be an old hand – you can show me the ropes,” with a wicked giggle.

I lunged at her, but she was already in the bathroom; being curious as much as furious, of course I followed her, only to stop like a statue, gulping. I didn’t know whether to scream for help or just expire on the spot. The biggest female name in movies, the “fun kid” always on for a lark, was standing before the mirror with a safety razor blade in her hand, intently drawing the said blade in light, but blood-producing lines down one cheek of her famous face. She made two or three such cuts; she turned to me,

“That ought to convince them. The cuts aren’t too deep – they’ll heal in a few days. Listen now, I’ll say the bear- attacked us, knocked us both down and scratched my face. Won’t Eddie get a fright? – and you stick to your story!”

I’d collapsed onto the toilet seat, completely speechless by this time. Finally my voice returned, but even my mother wouldn’t have recognised it,

“You goddam silly bitch, we’ll end up in jail,” I repeated. “You could ruin your stupid face for life.”

“Nah, I told you they’re only scratches,” she giggled. “And if we go to jail I’ll blame you for it all.” She giggled again and that did it.

I made another lunge to hit her, but stopped as she still had the blade in her hand looking for a place to drop it. I was just going into my second tirade when the door, flung wide open, gave entrance to what seemed to be the entire motion picture personnel. I really did think I’d faint - even Clara looked a bit pale. She had such lovely skin, completely without blemish until now, so the cuts and resultant blood looked worse than they were.

Poor, darling Eddie dashed in, put his arms around Clara and looked at me.

“Where, oh where, did you get to? I’ve been out of my mind. Paramount is hounding me, newspapers calling and some are coming up here. The forest rangers have been looking all over and nobody has seen you since the fisheries man - radio has flashed from coast to coast that you’re missing.” He stopped, staring. “Here, what happened to your face? Both of you are covered with mud and water - thank God you’re safe though. He finally ran out of breath and I guess his nerves were beginning to steady - I sure wished mine were. I just stood and stared stupidly - what else. Clara recovered quickly,

“Oh Eddie darling,” the tears started.

I’ll kill her, I thought, she’ll get us both hanged. The actress was at work and so was the temptress.

“Oh Eddie, I thought we’d never see you alive again, didn’t we Tui?” She turned from Eddie.

I was still speechless, but she glared at me and I managed a feeble nod. Faces crowded around us, but for the life of me I can’t remember who they belonged to, except for Eddie and George Cooper.

“Eddie, the biggest bear – she had cubs too – attacked us and knocked us down at the stream.”

I shuddered again. There were more tears and the actress went on and on, building on her part as she let her considerable imagination run riot. I gulped and spluttered, collapsing into a large arm chair.

Eventually everybody left except Eddie. He poured us both a stiff drink and told us to take a shower and go to bed – he’d have some food sent up. We readily agreed. As we cleaned ourselves I really got stuck into Clara, reminding her in no kind terms that now the word was out she would have a fine time with both studio and newspapers. Slowly she became aware of the enormity of the escapade and made me promise not to give her away. I wouldn’t have told anyone for the world – I felt like a stupid ass myself.

True to his word, Eddie sent up some food, which we fell on gratefully, before collapsing into bed. Clara clearly was as worried as I now. We lay in the dark discussing the whole silly episode, finally agreeing it would be best if we left the next morning instead of Monday. It was our own damn fault we’d ruined our holiday – worse to me was that we’d spoiled the weekend for Eddie and his cast; Eddie was such a kind and friendly man I felt miserable about the whole situation. I wouldn’t say Clara was exactly exuberant either – ah yes, she’d found out that Eddie cared alright, but just as he’d have cared if it had happened to any friend or member of his cast. We both felt ashamed and rightly so.

Eddie’s job as director was a very responsible one. In the earlier days the director was the boss on a picture – his was the last word – he was the big shot, and to be obeyed. The producer one now hears so much of and from, was fairly remote from the set, usually consulting with the director in an office on the schedule, cast and money matters. The director was obliged to see everything ran smoothly, so his was a very important and worrisome job. An example of the troubles a director can have

came from Woody Van Dyke. A few years later Woody told me of his adventures in Africa while he was making *Trader Horn* for MGM in 1930. Being on location at those sort of places, in the early days especially, was far from romantic or exotic – most of all it was damned uncomfortable, lacking the simplest amenities for everyday hygiene, including toilet facilities. Woody had the added worry of picking his way behind trees, boulders and everywhere else privacy permitted, to inspect the faeces of the whole crew, actors and actresses. Woody had been instructed on what to look for and he was a very thorough man, but despite his vigilance, the leading lady, Edwina Boot contracted a jungle fever and after suffering from the effects of it for some years, she died.

Woody was very concerned about this, naturally, but knowing how well he cared for his people, nobody could, or ever did, blame him. This is just one example of the responsibility those directors had thrust upon them. MGM was the first major studio I remember bringing in all the producers, co-producers and assistants to the producer, to lessen the director's load. This also went on in the camera department. I personally believe the Movie Czars (better known now as moguls, but I distinctly remember them being referred to as Czars) were more concerned to make as many jobs as possibly available for their European relatives – hence the assistants to assistants galore. Many of the early motion picture hierarchy migrated to America from Russia, late in the nineteenth and early in the twentieth century, to escape a wave of oppression being meted out on the Jewish peasantry. Workers in the twenties and thirties didn't give a damn where they came from as long as we got work. There was no reference made to communists and very little mention made to bolsheviks either.

As Clara and I lay awake talking in the dark, we decided to ask Eddie to play down the “Lost in Yosemite” bit as much as possible, especially with the publicity people. He certainly did his best, but still the newspapers carried the report from coast to

coast. Clara and I breakfasted early with only Eddie and his crew in evidence. We took a grateful and slightly tearful farewell from Eddie. I knew he was disappointed at our early departure, but he realised the “hoo-ha” made by the newspapers about anything concerning movies and movie people, whether the story was true or false, and unfortunately this time the story was true.

Back at Beverly Hills, Bob met us in the living room and he was hopping mad – and I mean literally hopping – from one foot to the other. He took one look at Clara’s face and crowed like a stricken rooster, which bird frequently came into my mind when he was sounding off.

“I knew no good would come of this flitting around the countryside unaccompanied,” he shrieked. “The newshawks are having a field day – B.P.’s been on the phone all day, he wants to see you immediately —.”

Clara kissed her father, told him not to worry as we were okay and had only been lost a short while – it was nothing – just a big fuss.

We all felt the need of an early night and the next day I accompanied Clara to Paramount to give her some moral support. Understandably the studio bosses had been worried when they heard Clara’s face had been disfigured, but most of the upset disappeared when they saw the superficial scratches, already becoming quite faint. Their concern was natural – Clara’s face was one of their most valuable pieces of property.³¹ When I think back on some of the folk who were extras in a few of Clara’s films at that time, I feel sure that fate or luck had as much to do with the making of stars as work, pulling strings or connections. Jean Harlow was one such and Clark Gable, who photographed like a plug-ugly, was another. Of course she also had other splendid actors and actresses to back her.

Clara Bow's New Stepmother



—International Photo.

MRS. TUI LORRAINE BOW.

FORMERLY secretary to the motion picture actress, she has become her stepmother by marriage to Robert Bow, the star's father.

St Louis Post-Dispatch 27 September 1928.

That night Clara had a date, so Bob and I sat and talked about our future. I told him I was not at all satisfied with the way I'd let my own career all but disintegrate through my lack of attention to it since our hasty marriage.³²

I'd missed several good jobs by being an almost constant companion to Clara. Bob admitted we had agreed I should continue my career after marriage but first he'd planned a honeymoon in Vancouver, Canada. I had been to the Department of Naturalisation and was to put in for first papers after I'd left and re-entered the country.

Within a week we were on the train in our private sitting room rocketing north through California, Oregon and Washington states. It was a long trip, but we were doing it in style and comfort and it was interesting to see the other states. It became progressively colder, but I liked it for a change and had suitable clothing to cope. To help the time pass more quickly Bob taught me the card game, Pinocle, which was very popular then - it resembled Bezique. There were no transistors or television then, but a worse blow to me (not to Bob, though) was the lack of a liquor bar.

As we travelled further north the scenery interested me more. Out of Seattle, Washington state, it was lovely - the train followed the Columbia River for many miles. It was a beautiful stretch, scarred only by a federal penitentiary built on an island in the river. I can't imagine why they selected that spot, because although the river was wide, desperate men could have reached either side - I never heard of it happening just the same. I was glad when we reached Blain, then crossed into Canada and soon pulled into the station at Vancouver.

Bob's endless cigar smoke and both our restlessness in confined, although private space, began to make us both snappy and irritable. One new piece of information came my way on this trip - Bob had remarried after Clara's mother had died. The Lady's name completely escapes me, but I gathered the nuptial knot frayed even earlier than mine was to do. I never was

interested enough to find out where or when this event took place.

Our baggage was loaded into a taxi which took us to the Vancouver Hotel, where we had reserved a very spacious and comfortable suite. It was THE hotel in Vancouver, solidly built and with an air of grace, luxury and antiquity - naturally it has been pulled down, as have most such edifices in the western world, to be replaced by towering square boxes, mostly look-alike concrete, glass and aluminium monstrosities. Bob preferred to eat in the suite and I didn't mind either way. I must confess I enjoyed the breakfasts in bed - I wasn't too used to that. Studios were notorious for getting all but the most recalcitrant of stars up and at 'em from five each morning, yuck! We had three weeks to put in in Vancouver and it poured rain the whole bloody time! At best Vancouver was not a hilarious city in my opinion and I was heartily fed up with Bob, Canada and the honeymoon within the first week.

The only thought brightening my peanut brain was the fact that Canada did not have prohibition - that's what I thought. Very early in the piece I phoned down asking for a "fifth" of scotch from the non-existent bar. In accents pure and simple (well simple anyway) the female voice at the other end of the line asked,

"What bahr?"

In unladylike accents I replied, "Why, the liquor bar, you bloody dill."

The last three words I'd muffled by holding my hand over the mouth-piece. Bob had, once more, gone into his dance step from one foot to another at the first mention of "ole barley corn".

"I'm sorry, modom, we duon't have bahrs in Vancouver. You will hev tuo go tuo the borttle shop."

Bang went both receivers in unison - seems the bars were all in "them thar hills" - oh well. Bob started into another tirade, but I cut in smartly.

“The stinking rotten dump hasn’t even a bar. That silly dame on the switch says you hev tuo go tuo the borttle shop, whatever the hell that is. Go down and find out before I leap out of the window from sheer boredom.”

Bob was getting tuned up for a few rounds of the sitting room until he saw my face. Hastily he complied. While he was gone I did some thinking. Extremely fed up by now with being hotel-bound, ostensibly due to inclement weather, I made up my mind to don red leather coat, fur-lined water-proof boots and sally forth, fifth or sixth with or without Robert Walter Bow come sleet, snow or hell fire. I’m a bit slow on the mind up-making bit, but once I’ve done so, I’m extremely hard to put up with if I’m thwarted. Bob soon arrived back and not empty handed – I could plainly see the shape of the bottle under his arm. Not that he approved mind you, his lips were pursed with complete disapproval.

“Well,” I said.

“Well what?” He replied.

I snorted, “Oh no, you’re not going to start that again!”

“Well,” he insisted. “They don’t have proper bars here, only a few beer parlours and a few licenced bottle shops. You have to take the liquor home; you can’t drink it elsewhere.”

“You know what they can do with their beer parlours – gawd, what a —.” I stopped myself in time. “Okay Bob, open the bottle and get the glasses from the bathroom. We’re going to have a drink and then we’re getting out of this jail to see what there is to see in this burg.”

Bob gave me a piteous look – quite accusing really, but I wanted some fresh air and figured he needed some too. We dressed warmly and with a couple of belts under my belt (Bob’s too, I might add. He wasn’t backward) we left the central heating to face a blast straight off the North Pole.

I smelled the sea, saw the ships and steered Bob in their direction. I’ve already mentioned my love of the sea and the smell, of real ships and at that moment I sorely needed to be

near both. Even Bob started to perk up a bit and forget the pile of paperback westerns he thought he'd rather be reading. The quays were long and fully occupied by ocean-going liners, mostly I noticed from the Far east - China, Japan, Hong Kong and those, then, far away places. My imagination began working overtime - the rain was pouring down on Vancouver, but I could smell the cherry blossom and see the paper umbrellas, the wee rickshaws racing and the little ladies bobbing past in trousers and tightly bound feet. I sighed and longed to be on one of those ships bound for the mysterious East. I didn't dream it then, but that day did come. Bob, cigar in mouth as usual, surprisingly seemed to be enjoying the sights and smells almost as much as I was. Then I remembered he had worked on the docks of Brooklyn, New York, so I guess he was dreaming too, but backwards instead of forwards, as I was doing. We walked for what seemed miles in the rain, but loved it all. Daylight was fading so we slowly returned to the hotel.

As we entered the foyer, Lita Grey Chaplin was going out. I had heard she was in the process of divorcing Charlie Chaplin. She was pretty and dark in a Mexican-looking fashion. We passed but never met. She was the mother of Charlie's first two sons.

After I had made a few preliminary enquiries at the hotel desk, I felt almost cheerful. It seemed there were many interesting, even beautiful, sights to see, including a mountain not too far away where it was snowing right then - that I could believe. Apparently a bus ran up there. They pronounced it Grouse Mountain and may also spell it that way - I didn't ask. Another place to see was Victoria Island. Vancouver is set in a network of waterways, making a large number of pleasant short boat trips possible. It was also suggested no one could visit the area without driving for hours through glorious Stanley Park - with beautiful Maple trees with leaves turning the whole colour spectrum. I toted all this information upstairs to Bob who was already immersed in a western paperback. After I had almost

threateningly informed him we'd be doing all these trips, he sighed and said,

“Alright, I'll take you, but sight-seer I ain't.”

“How right you are, pal,” I replied.

We did the lot. The scenery was beautiful and breathtaking and the time flew, but I must confess, returning to Blain and the United States was a bigger thrill, especially getting my first Citizen Papers and meeting the head lady of the department which handled these, Miss Olive Ann Pixley. I was to know her a long time and consider her a second mother until her death a few years ago, in California. I'll always remember, Olive.³³

Arriving back to Southern California's clean, clear, eternal sunshine was a pleasant experience after the dreary grey of Vancouver's weather; we did not once see sunshine there. From the train Bob and I went by taxi to the hotel.³⁴ We hadn't advised Clara of the actual date of our homecoming, leaving it as a surprise. Dr Warner of the Warner-Kelton Hotel had had our suite redecorated throughout - a sweet gesture, but I must say his choice of colours was bizarre in the extreme. The bathroom was black with splashes of red and yellow; the colour schemes in the other rooms were equally nerve-crashing. Today I dearly love those Van Gogh colours, but not then. Clara was way ahead of me as she loved them then and wore them quite daringly, intense red hair or no.

I've always blamed poor Doc Warner's kind redecoration colour job for Bob's and my perpetual squabbling, arguing and niggling at each other. Another cause was Bob's jealousy, which was doubtless helped along by those clashing colours. Whenever the phone rang we both made Olympian time getting there to answer it, often colliding, nearly breaking limbs en route - most of the calls were for me. He was a real blood hound too, when it came to “tracking”. Often I perceived him in my rear view mirror, hanging on doggedly in spite of my brilliant sports car driving and evasive tactics. It was slowly dawning on me that marriage wasn't going to be all it was cracked up to be. (Strangely

fifty odd years later I'm still of the same opinion, which, I think, proves I wasn't quite the dill I was thought to be.)

After having unpacked we called Clara, but she was still at the studio working late into the night. Bob went about his business the next morning and I went to Paramount, where Clara was working on the finishing stages of a picture. Between shots we caught up on current affairs. She seemed really pleased to see me and as I was dressed and made up in the then modish style, (which is the same now). Clara asked the "still" photographer to take a picture of us together. We had only a snapshot or two from Yosemite and as these were close-up photographs I was quite anxious to see them. We were photographed in four or five different poses. I mention this seemingly trivial occurrence because later it was to join a number of other small matters to hint at something I would not have thought possible - something I wouldn't have believed if someone had told me it was fact.

Some weeks later I asked Clara about the pictures. She seemed disinterested but said she'd seen the proofs and didn't like any of them, especially of me. She said they were so bad she'd had them destroyed, both proofs and negatives. I didn't see them at all and even then thought it somewhat strange, I said that surely there would have been at least one shot that wasn't too bad, but she shrugged and said she didn't consider them good enough. However the day they were taken Clara and I laughed, joked and were quite happy. We called Bob and told him to come to Bedford Drive where we'd have a quiet family dinner together and talk about our trip. That night we did have a cosy home chat and Clara was interested in our "honeymoon gambols". She said she'd missed us but had been very busy.

Contrary to what many think about her career, Clara made several good films with strong dramatic stories - one seldom, if ever, hears of their titles, *Capital Punishment*, *Free to Love*, *The Primrose Path*, *My Lady of Whims* and the story I've already mentioned, written by the stage actress, Dorothy Mackay, *Ladies of the Mob*. This was a dramatic prison story to which Clara did

justice.³⁵ Another was *The Plastic Age*, in which my good friend, Henry B. Walthall, gave his usual sensitive and splendid performance and a young, very ordinary looking Clark Gable was an extra. Of course Eleanor Glyn's *It* is the film with which Clara was most identified, for several reasons. Mrs Glyn received heaps of publicity at this time, mainly due to a story titled *Three Weeks*, which was considered almost pornography then and at best it certainly was risqué. The vamp-type leading lady was Aileen Pringle, who spent most of her acting time undulating on a tiger, leopard or bear-skin rug, caressing the head whilst raising or lowering her eyelids in varying degrees of supposed passion. *Three Weeks* was made in 1924, but I do remember that much about it. Madam Glyn (or so she was called in those days) gave the impression that *Three Weeks* was more or less based on her own lifestyle, thus titillating those able to be titillated. So Madam Glyn had no trouble getting the fabulous prices she demanded for her naughty stories and the undreamed of publicity just naturally followed.



Aileen Pringle in *Three Weeks*.

Clara even made a movie with Eddie Cantor in 1926, *Kid Boots*. Eddie Cantor had made *Kid Boots* a smash hit on Broadway and this was his first movie. Clara was a very versatile actress indeed and could have risen to great heights, dramatically, had she not been so good as the epitome of the flapper age. When Bob and I returned from Canada she was just completing *Red Hair*: Her leading man, Lane Chandler, was a swell guy, but not quite romantic enough in the mould of the day and I don't recall him doing many leads after that, but occasionally I see him today on television, mostly in "heavy" roles in westerns. I sometimes wonder what the business and our people would have done without the westerns and the rest of those "back-lot" productions - times would have been much leaner, that I know.

Now that I was home in the hotel suite, many of my friends and acquaintances started calling. If I managed to get to the phone first, Bob stood right there, listening to every word. His jealousy was really out of all proportion and slightly beyond a joke. It made no difference to him whether other people were around or not. He wasn't the slightest bit upset if others witnessed the bickering, however I did care and determined to end this obnoxious behaviour one way or another. My time was mostly spent at the studios meeting friends and looking for work. Bob, as I've mentioned, had a dry cleaning shop which failed eventually. It didn't surprise me as he seemed to spend little time there. Nobody could blame me for the failure of his restaurant, for I'd left before it ever opened.

The constant bitching was playing hell with my nervous system and intermittently, the old nerve paralysis returned with its frightening sensation. Of course this necessitated calls from my doctor and his damned morphine. He still found this the most efficacious treatment. Although I was worried about the drug, I was more terrified of the awful illness and happy to get any relief. I guess my friend upstairs was watching over me as addiction was averted, but gradually the bottle became more

important, which was a great pity, for I didn't know it then, but I wasn't a "good drinker". That is part of another long story not related to this episode except that I often drank to stop the effects of the nerve disorder – I thought. At first a few drinks did seem to help and earlier, drink had not affected me so badly, but as I got older, although still in my twenties, stresses became greater and liquor had a decidedly bad effect. It wasn't known then that some people simply cannot drink, because the alcohol starts a deadly chain reaction in their systems. Such people, who need not be weak in character, but are simply allergic (makes them unable to cope with alcohol) are now known as alcoholics. In those days, however, they were simply considered to be a drunk and unreliable, which was true when drink was concerned. They were largely dodged and often denigrated. Many people, a few of them great stars, were blacklisted at the studios because of excessive drinking. We should always be grateful to Lillian Roth, who travelled the world to give publicity to Alcoholics Anonymous, for it has saved thousands of lives in hundreds of countries. I was in Hollywood when Lillian Roth made *The Vagabond King* – a fine film in which she was splendid.

Clara, who was between pictures, said she was going to spend a week at Malibu and invited us to come down at the weekend. I had several days' work at MGM, and also scripts for two plays to read. I'd been offered the lead in both if I wanted them. Both were dramatic parts, which I loved to do on stage and I did agree to do them.³⁶ Work was starting to pile up – a situation I greatly desired as I continually sent money to Glory through the good years. The distant rumble of world-wide depression could be heard in the distance, but we, in Hollywood, gaily jazzed on. It is so typical of my off-beat life that in the depression years, up to 1933, when so many people were desperately hard up, these were among my best times financially and for work. Glory often wrote to me of their hard times and for years I sent at least ten American dollars a week to her, often more. Ten American dollars was worth between five and six pounds in New Zealand.

She later told me they would camp up some lane or on a camping ground, waiting for my accumulated mail, four or five letters at a time, so they could pay their bills, buy gasoline and move on to show, often for only a shilling for adults and sixpence for children. They didn't mention this to anyone - out of pride, I guess - and we didn't speak much of it in later years, but I gathered that the little blue slips saved them from too much financial desperation "down-under".

Bob said he didn't want to go to Malibu - he'd rather stay at the hotel and read his westerns. There was probably some truth in this, but I'm sure he also had other things in mind - "indoor sport" was never far from his mind. I didn't say anything. I knew he didn't like parties and didn't drink except for the occasional one. He wasn't a good mixer; picture people ignored him and he them. Arts and crafts were beyond his ken, so understandably he sought that which he could understand and that just wasn't our sorts. I could understand why he fell so hard for me. There had been two other French-doll looking babies before Clara - both had died and Clara nearly did, all the more confirming that our "thing" was a father-daughter affair. Had he contained his jealousy we surely would have remained married longer than we did. He did understand that Clara liked to have me around as she could trust me and as she didn't have many women friends. I threw a weekend bag in my auto and roared off towards Malibu beach - I'm sure Bob wasn't lonely that weekend, so don't feel sorry for him.

I arrived rather late and fun and games were in full swing in the rumpus room. There seemed to be the usual gang on first impression, although it appeared a little crowded even for Malibu. Looking around and catching the atmosphere I had a sneaking feeling, a sort of uneasiness, that something was out of place. I noticed a tall, average looking blonde woman, obviously enjoying herself immensely, gaily entering the various games, laughing, drinking and flirting here and there. I vaguely knew the face and placed it with the uneasy feeling as I watched her. She

hadn't noticed me, so I continued to puzzle over her identity. An actress? No, that didn't jell - I had no idea.

Suddenly Clara saw me and rushed headlong through the crowd, with an enthusiastic welcome kiss.

"Thank God the picture's really finished. I found it boring," she gushed.

"What about the new leading man?" I leered at her.

"Oh Lane, he's a swell guy, but not my sort Tui. You should know that by now."

"I sure should and I do - short on brains but not on other important appendages, eh!" I ducked as Clara threw a handy cushion at me, laughing merrily.

"You should know. You're an old married woman now," she quipped, then asked where Bob was. I told her.

"Nothing will ever change him," she sighed. "But I'm not too sure I'd want him to change."

I remained silent. Kay Francis was passing - we hadn't seen each other since I returned from Canada. She wished me luck, gave me a bear hug and kiss. I've always been very fond of Kay. She was one of the nicer stars I knew. She was kind and I personally never heard her utter an unkind word about anyone. Kay married many times - five in fact. Some years back I was saddened to read that she had died... another dear pal to go... and so hard for me to realise it. I wasn't surprised to hear she had left her wealth to charities.

But that day at Malibu Kay was young, beautiful and gay. She was just leaving Clara and me when the blonde who had been puzzling me danced up to Clara to tell her one of the boys wanted to see her over near the billiard table.

"Thanks," she started to go, then swung- back to us again. "Oh, Daisy, you haven't met Tui yet, have you?"

The woman looked at me and shook her head, I stared back at her without speaking.

“This is Daisy Devoe, Tui, my new hairdresser at the studio. We’ve become good friends since you and Dad were away. I’m sure you’ll like each other – back in a minute.”

She danced away to the jazzy music while Daisy and I looked hard at each other. I didn’t like what I saw and I guess she didn’t either – I noticed a faint uneasy look in her eyes. She started to mutter an answer to the introduction, but I cut in shortly with a “Hi” and turned on my heels to talk to Ruthie Mix. Miss Devoe and I never did change this attitude towards each other either at the studio or when Clara had her at social “playtimes”. Up to and including that visit, the Malibu weekends were great – we swam, had clam-bakes and weenie-roasts sitting around driftwood fires. Life was good, life was fun, the world was young and so were we and it wasn’t yet time for all of this to be taken from most of us.



Daisy Devoe with Clara Bow and her dog Duke

Clara’s carefree appearance pleased me as she had been so disturbed about an incident which had occurred after Bob’s and

my marriage and our delayed honeymoon. I may as well mention it as, despite our efforts to suppress it, it did appear in the press. Clara was, as so often happened, an innocent victim. It begun when she was having considerable pain in the area of her appendix. Her physician suggested hospital and an immediate operation. We arranged this and quickly had her admitted to St Vincent's Hospital where the appendix was removed. When it was over Clara lay back looking "pale and interesting", making me promise to spend as much time as possible with her, as we knew how she hated to be alone. Bob also popped in and out as often as his business allowed. During my first few visits I met a handsome and very glib intern, who, to my surprise, made a very obvious "pass" at me. I couldn't quite figure that out, with Clara being so handy - I wasn't used to being such an obvious object of attention when Clara was around, but I soon woke up. By paying attention to me he had an excuse to drop in when I visited Clara.

Clara had seemed entirely disinterested in Dr Earl Pearson until now, but as her recovery progressed I noted a new and exquisite negligee and other little signs. Although she was still "pale and interesting", she began to take a great deal of interest in her environment - Dr Earl included. He had asked me out a few times at first - to dinner and a show - but, handsome as he undoubtably was, I'd refused. Bob was lurking about and besides, I was just recently married. Soon Clara was up and about and ready to go home. Herbert drove me in the Lincoln to pick her up and, as usual, I entered her private room without preamble - but I backed smartly out again, slightly embarrassed. Clara and Earl were engaged in what could only be called a stranglehold - a fond farewell? I hoped so: I knocked and re-entered. Clara thought nothing of it. She knew I was used to seeing her "love is a many splendoured thing" act, but Dr Earl was something else. Red of face and very flustered he stuttered a hasty "adieu" and beat a hasty retreat.

Clara laughed, more quietly than usual, then looked searchingly at my pink face and asked soberly,

“Tui, you’re not interested in Earl are you? I wouldn’t hurt you for the world, but you know, I think I’ve flipped for him - but tell me, though, please?”

Perhaps I had been a little, for I felt mildly angry, though now I think it was more at being used as the pawn in an intrigue, I answered brusquely,

“Oh go to hell. You’re welcome to him. All men are bastards anyway!”

Clara fell on my neck happily, saying,

“I really do think I’m in love with him, but if you had been, well - I.”

“Forget it Clara, if that’s how you feel, okay by me, but he did -“I shut up and just looked at the floor.

Very softly Clara said, “I know, hon, in fact I’ve known for some time. One day I asked him straight out - are you in love with Tui - I don’t want her hurt. I also asked him if he was married or engaged or something,” Clara finished lamely.

“Well?”

“I can tell you now Tui, because you won’t be hurt. He said he’d made a bit of a play for you so he could see me and I might notice him.”

“Oh, fine,” I snorted. “As if I didn’t know - also, does he keep a harem, or just one wife?” I was being bitchy and knew it, but something was wrong somehow. I do have some sort of extra insight, which I put down to having had to fight for survival as a child.

“Funny you should say that. He is married, but living apart from his wife, whom he is divorcing soon.”

Clara looked thoughtful and somewhat uncertain. I felt as though something nasty would emerge from the woodwork any minute. I wanted to cheer Clara up, so said lightly,

“Never mind – lets shake this morgue. Plenty of fish in the sea and you’ll soon forget the sonofabitch – he stinks like lysol anyway.”

We both laughed uneasily. Back home Clara turned on the Panatrope – a swanky record player for those days; and the records were all heavyweight 78s – they sure could make a noise, though, and that’s exactly what Clara wanted then; noise, and plenty of it. Later that evening I wandered into the bedroom; I thought Clara was resting in the Chinese room, but instead she was finishing a telephone conversation which I couldn’t help but overhear.

“Okay, Earl honey, I’ll be waiting, but come just as soon as you’re off-duty. A short pause, then, “Me too, sweetie.” Sounds of kisses into the mouthpiece and then she hung up.

I plonked down on the half-acre bed while Clara was needlessly saying, “That was Earl. He’s off-duty early and coming to dinner – okay?”

“So? It’s your place, you can have who you like here, Red. Why ask me? Pearson’s alright, but I don’t trust him and you’d be wise if you didn’t either.”

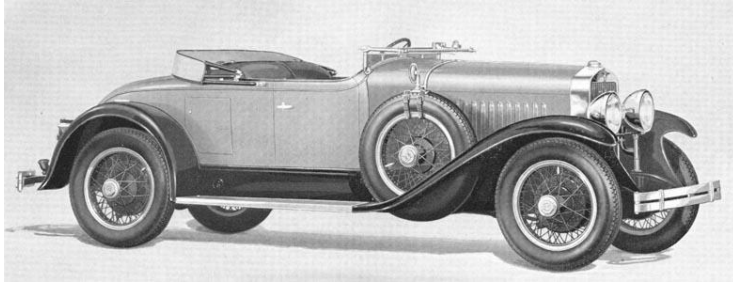
Clara laughed happily; I think she thought I was a little jealous and perhaps others would too, but strangely I wasn’t; I just had an uneasy feeling of impending trouble. Brother, if we’d only known; trouble came in plenty, but not for quite a while as our time went those days.

Clara casually dropped the information that Daisy Devoe would be there for dinner too. I had intended to call Bob and tell him to come out, but called instead to say I was leaving for the hotel right away. I wasn’t about to eat with two rats I trusted not at all. Clara wanted to know why I wasn’t staying.

“I’m an old married woman now – have you forgotten?”

“Hell no, but that shouldn’t matter. It hasn’t before,” grinning, she got her dig in.

Calling that I would see her around and so long, I hopped into my new LaSalle convertible and screeched out of the driveway toward Hollywood.



A 1927 Cadillac LaSalle convertible

I drove down Wiltshire Boulevard, because, although it carried heavy traffic, it was pleasant and wide and I could then turn left onto Rossmore which took me to Vine street - and just off Vine Street was the Warner-Kelton. More and more highrise buildings were springing up, seemingly over-night. The “sold” sign was visible on almost every empty allotment. It was one of Hollywood’s success legends that the serial queen, Ruth Roland, who had been second only to the great Pearl White, had bought up every bit of land along Wiltshire Boulevard in the cheap early years and now was a millionairess from her wheeling and dealing. She deserved every bit of her success. Ruth seldom worked in pictures now, but we had been on the same bill for various charities countless times, so we had a speaking acquaintance. She was a likeable person, but the thing most Hollywoodites would always remember her for was her determination to sing.

Many of the charity concerts were for servicemen from World War I and over the several years we did them, I never heard Ruth sing anything but *Roses of Picardy* and *The Rose of No-man’s Land*. All of Hollywood had a chuckle about this, but it was a kindly chuckle. Ruth was no Melba, but one could listen

to her – like it or not. It reminds me a bit of Bette Davis and *I'm Writing a Letter to Daddy* – enjoyable fun if not taken seriously. Gosh I'm glad I live so far away- especially where Bette is concerned – I'm not too sure of her sense of humour. Dear Ruth left us many years ago and wouldn't have given a damn anyway.



Ruth Roland



Bette Davis

As I drove along Wiltshire Boulevard and looked at the millions going up, I thought “good on yer Ruth”. Soon I was parked at the lot and on my way up to my “ever-lovin’”. The desk clerk gave me two messages. One, to my great surprise was from Paramount Casting Office and the other was from the producer, Mr Van Pelt, whom I'd worked for in the past. Bob greeted me affably, which always made me suspicious, although, judging from the pile of paperback westerns near his bed, things looked innocent enough. We went down to the coffee shop, ordered coffee and doughnuts, then I filled him in about Earl Pearson – for once Bob and I were in perfect agreement – we both thought there was a little axe-grinding going on and that he should be watched diligently. Not being over-sensitive, Bob

didn't have much of a sixth sense, but I sure made up for both of us and even he was uneasy.

Bob and I had our usual morning brawl next day, about trivia mostly and I said the usual "to hell with it all" and as Paramount was not far from where we lived, I decided to walk over. I had some thinking to do. In 1929 the studios were still making pictures silent, but with some parts sound, but "talkies" were well on their way in, so that by the end of 1929 (with the exception of Charlie Chaplin) there were few that were not "talkies". I was uneasy about the future of moving pictures and the changes in the Hollywood I'd fallen in love with. More and more strange faces were to be seen everywhere and these were the people taking over "our" industry. My sixth sense was working overtime and I almost wish I'd left the place that day. The few "all talkie" movies I'd seen were full of strangers. The producers were going all-out, to entice anybody who had even walked on a stage in New York, especially Broadway, to the pictures. This was the reason that for the first few years of sound, pictures were stilted and stage and motion in pictures was almost non-existent.

Many in the industry were justly indignant at being passed over in this way. We had been in Hollywood for years working our guts out for peanuts while the "Czars" grew more fat, rich and objectionable. Of course, by this time there were the smart few who had formed United Artists, which made them independent of the "moguls", but show me the star who can make a "seven reeler" on his or her own without any help at all. On the stage it has been done often, but not in motion pictures. We had no guild then and no recourse of any sort. We had to take what we were offered, small print and all. I know we'd have taken it all in our stride had they at least tested us for "talkies", as many big names I knew then had fine talents never used – it happened to me, too. True, it is long ago and best forgotten now, but I believe the history of Movies should record it – just like old soldiers, many of us didn't die, we just faded away.

Upon enquiry at Paramount casting, I learned that Clara was to start a picture with a circus background, *Dangerous Curves*, I hid my astonishment as best I could – naturally people would think I'd been told about it by Clara, but I hadn't.

"Mrs Bow, we know you are an accomplished circus performer, there is a small, but good, part in Clara's picture. We'd like you to do it."

I nodded agreement, signed the usual contract and went to wardrobe to be outfitted. My costumes were put aside with my professional name attached. I saw Coop emerging from an office and hailed him. He sauntered over, a pleasant grin on his handsome face.

I grinned back, "Long time no see, big boy."

"Tui! I didn't know you cared," he chuckled.

"You know exactly what I mean, you son of a gun. I've been hearing little bits about you and Lupe, yes?"

His face had a pinkish glow, but he still smiled.

"Coop, why don't you marry Clara? You're made for each other."

A cloud flitted across his clear eyes. "Too late now Tui. I've been hearin' about some doctor fellow she's really gone overboard for, I've seen them together a lot, so I guess it's true."

"I know, Gary. That's why I wish you'd marry her. Something about that guy disturbs me. He's so damn plausible."

I changed the subject – Gary looked unhappy and I didn't want that.

"Never mind about that, kiddo, I'm doing a spot of work here, so I'll see you."

He stooped a long way down to kiss my cheek good bye, then sauntered on his way.

Back at the hotel the desk clerk said Mr Bow had left a message. It was a short note saying he'd gone to Clara's for dinner and for me to join them if I wished. I didn't wish – my Irish and French blood hardly makes for a calm temperament and I felt mine rising to a slow boil. I went alone, unusual for

me, to the Hotel Roosevelt for dinner. Entering the lounge afterwards, I couldn't believe my eyes; going out was Sadie, Beatrice Lillie's secretary. I yelled after her, we shook hands and she gave me Bea's suite number. Thanking her, I almost ran for the elevators. Bea opened the door herself - we took one look and fell on each other's neck. Tears came to my eyes. I hadn't seen my dear friend for a few years and, being a little unhappy at



Louis Alter

that moment, the chance meeting was very sweet indeed. A small party was in progress and I joined in happily. Bea introduced me to a few people standing about - one was Lew Alter, who composed *Manhattan Serenade* and little else that I've heard about. I had a very pleasant surprise when I spotted Cedric Belfrage, the journalist I'd met when he interviewed Clara. I greeted Ceddie joyfully and then gave him my telephone number as, for the moment he was resident in Hollywood, doing an article on Bea. Bea's guests were busy imbibing and decimating the hors d'oeuvre, which gave us time to sit and catch up on the news. Bea's trip was a fast business one - she'd only hit Hollywood the day before and was off again the next day to open a show on Broadway. Lucie and Bobby were in England, where the little chap was now in school. As it was late, Bea asked Lew Alter to drive me home. Fortunately it was only a few blocks, that guy had octopus blood for sure!

I never did see Bea again; just heard a little news occasionally, but through all the long years my loving friendship has never diminished.

When I arrived home Bob was waiting for me. I could see the thunder clouds, so I got in first. Abruptly I told him what had happened - he still wanted to argue, but I said,

"Enough already: start, and I'll walk out," and I meant it.



Clara Bow with Earl Pearson

The marriage was on shaky ground from the first - I should have known, but truly I didn't. "How was Dr. Cut-em-up," I asked.

"Oh that sonofabitch was there alright and so was Daisy Devoe. I don't know what's gotten into Clara lately, she seems content to have only that pair around for company. Guess we should have stayed in the house so I could keep an eye on things."

I laughed dryly, "That's what you think. She's a big girl now and should know how she wants to live. She wants privacy and so do I." This was said somewhat scathingly.

I didn't tell Bob about my job at Paramount. I knew he'd tell Clara and I was interested to be there to see her reaction. Bob mentioned Clara had started a new picture a day or two before.

"Oh, what about?" I enquired blandly.

"How should I know? She never discusses things like that now," he said in a disgusted tone.

I knew that was true. Daisy Devoe had come home with Clara for dinner and was spending the night there. I was seeing less and less of my old buddy; she had fallen hard for Earl Pearson and Daisy Devoe had her ear and Clara was to pay dearly, in more ways than one for both of these "privileges".

The "sound" shooting at Paramount was being done at night, to cut down on the noise from traffic and planes. The stages were being sound-proofed, but it was a large task and time was of the essence. Three evenings later I picked up my wardrobe, made up, dressed and made for the set. Everything was about ready to

go - Clara, still in her “set” dressing room was having her hair arranged by Miss Devoe and was just about ready to start. The director was a darling man - kind, patient, and, like my dear old friend, Count Mario Caracciolo, had that old-world charm, exuded by so many intelligent foreign men in those days. No wonder the girls fell for them! Ah, me! He was married to an actress named Dorothy Mackaill - his name was Lothar Mendes. He greeted me warmly and explained my scene, which was a fairly simple one.

Most of the cast were old friends, Kay Francis, Dick Arlen, my heart throb as leading man, David Newell, Anders Randolph, May Boley, a splendid character actress, Stuart Irwin, Charles D. Brown, Jack Luden and Joyce Compton. I didn't go to Clara's dressing room - just sat in a dim corner, waiting to surprise her. Her arrival on the set started a flurry of movement and a sort of nervous excitement. She was smiling and gay, greeting the people we knew. Suddenly she spotted me sitting apart. The smile froze and the look in her eyes was one I'd never before seen, where I was concerned. Quickly she regained her cool and walked toward me.

“Why, Tui, what a surprise: I had no idea you'd be here. You're in the picture?”

“Just,” I answered quietly. “They sent for me, I didn't apply; but it's a circus story and there's a small part they offered me. Thought I'd surprise you.”

“You sure have - yes, you sure have.”

I nearly said I hoped she didn't mind, but thought better of it, after all the part was unimportant and why shouldn't I work when it was offered? But I could still see that expression flit through her eyes, one I didn't like or understand, but it hurt.

We did several scenes, mostly involving Clara and Joyce Compton having a tongue bashing. May Boley and I sat about, mostly filling in as it was a dressing-tent scene. Mr Mendes called me, telling me to get ready for a big close-up. The make up woman patted my face with powder and I did my own hair, as

usual. Devoe stayed out of my way – she knew. Mr Mendes told me, for the third time, what he wanted, I got into position, did what he directed, but also added and padded the scene, hoping for a very good close-up scene – it was, and injected more sense and interest. Mr Mendes let the scene roll until I’d finished, then came over and took my arm, saying,

“Tui, that was good. I’m so pleased you added that bit – livens up the whole shot.”

I thanked him and looked at Clara, who had come to stand right behind Lothar Mendes chair, where she knew I’d see her plainly while I was working. She was not smiling, but Mr Mendes still had me by the arm, walking me toward his chair and Clara. As we reached her the guillotine fell. If only he had left it at that, but then, I guess nothing would have changed. The nice little man said,

“Clara, did you see that! I think your stepmother,” he smiled at me, “is one of the most natural actresses I’ve ever seen.”

His pleasant face was aglow with good will as he flopped into his chair. I was going to say something to Clara, but she had turned away and was talking to Daisy and May Boley. I thought, “Oh, Lothar, you dear silly man, how little you must know about movie stars to give a compliment like that to another woman, no matter who she is, family or friend, when the big star of the day was there.

Before the night’s shooting was ended, however, Clara did come over, but only to tell me to give a message to Bob that she wanted to see him on a matter of business the next day. I agreed to pass on the message and then blurted out,

“What the hell’s the matter with you – out with it so we’ll both know.”

Clara said nothing for a minute and Devoe came over to stand close by. I turned to her, saying,

“Do you mind? This is private and personal and I intend to keep it that way.”

She didn't answer, just glared and moved off. I looked back at Clara, whose eyes were lowered. I thought I saw a tear in them, but in those lights, everything glistens. As usual I said,

"Well?"

Clara replied, "I thought you'd tell me you had a part in my picture - I just think it's strange."

"Do you, Clara? For years I've thought it strange that a star of your magnitude hadn't even asked if I'd like a part in one of your shows, however I didn't get sore about it, just figured it was one of your oddities and let it go at that." I had to keep my cool and am proud to say I did, and went on, "But while we're having home truths, I'll give you a couple. Since you've been mixed up with that Pearson man and taking your hairdresser as a bosom buddy you've changed - and not for the better."

Clara flushed angrily, "Never mind that - just tell Dad I want to see him."

"Oh, sure. I'll do that alright, but I might add, he feels the same about this matter."

Clara didn't invite me to come over with Bob and we parted rather frostily, something we'd never done before. We were both "put out" and that was that. Much later I was to learn the full story and it made me both mad and sad.

Hardly realising it, I was steadily moving away from Clara's orbit. I had a small circle of friends and when not busy, went out with them - the composer Irving Caesar, the Broadway producer, Sam Wood (who had put Jeanne Eagels on the "white way" with the play, *Rain*, the magnificent painter, John Dekker, who was one of John Barrymore's buddies, and others. Another was Sam Coslow, whose lyric for *Just One More Chance*, had made a big hit. He played the piano beautifully and often came to play for me. I was very fond of Sam - they were all interesting, intelligent and dear friends, so I certainly wasn't lonely. Bob and I also saw much less of each other, by mutual consent - almost. I was busy with work of my own now. and mixing with more bohemian folk, whom I liked.

Picture work was slow, so I did the series of one act plays I'd agreed to do earlier. The themes were varied and I enjoyed getting my teeth into some good, solid acting again. I still worked in the early talkies when work was available and on one occasion I was called by a studio on "poverty row" - I can't remember whether it was Monogram or Republic and the job was unimportant except that it was almost certainly John Wayne's first starring role. He was big, rugged, serious and anxious to work. The scene was an ice hockey game and we shot it for a couple of days. Wayne was with this company for some time until the public claimed him. It was the only time I ever worked with, or met, him, but I admired many of his qualities and sadly, now have to list him with those gone.



Marion Morrison, USC footballer, who became John Wayne, actor

When my part in the film was finished I continued learning lines for the plays and rehearsing when time permitted. The theatrical group was maintained by Lloyd Pantages, a son of the second largest vaudeville circuit owners in America. There was

little or no money for the group sometimes, but the artists were some of the best around and so were the directors.

The evening after Clara's and my confrontation I arrived at the hotel early to find that Bob also was home early for a change. He said,

"Let's go out for dinner, I want to talk to you."

"Okay, that's a good idea. I'd like a yarn too," I replied.

We walked to a Japanese restaurant on Vine street, where the food, saké and service were good, sat in a booth and ordered. I told Bob of Clara's message and of my working on her picture. I also outlined, in no uncertain terms her reaction to my part in the film.

"Well, you could have told me," said Bob.

"Of course. I also could have told Lolly Parsons, Hedda Hopper and the L. A. Times," I said sarcastically.

Bob said he'd go out to Beverly Hills after dinner and find out what was cooking - and wouldn't I come too? I said no as I had lines to study. I also mentioned the fact that our marriage had broken down badly, so what about a divorce? Bob said no, protesting that he loved me too much to let me go. Tears came to his eyes readily - he was nearly as good an actor as L.B. Mayer, but not quite - few were.

I went upstairs to study when we returned to the hotel, while Bob left for Bedford Drive. I found I was far too unsettled to concentrate. And in no time at all, Bob was back, looking none too happy.

"Well?" I started.

"Well - hell, that's what." He slid down on the settee. "I couldn't stay any longer. 'Those two' were there and a couple from the cast. Clara took me to her bedroom and gave me hell because the dry cleaners shop is not doing well since the depression. We blew off a bit of steam, (I don't think he was being funny - I never knew him to have a sense of humour, not even about our marriage)- but we both calmed down. Oh - I asked her why she treated you so about her picture. She wouldn't

say much, but says won't you PLEASE come to Malibu for the weekend. She did say she missed you."

I said I'd think about it and Bob seemed pleased.

I decided to go at the weekend and arrived at about midday on Saturday when the noise was in full swing – so was Clara. She saw me drive up, came bouncing out and threw her arms around me.

"Glad you came ole buddy, buddy, s'not the same without you – here kiss and make up."

She slapped a wet kiss on my cheek, saying,

"Got some good champagne and bacardi, I'll fix a swell drink for my best step-mother, eh?"

"Thanks," I said, "At least you're feeling no pain."

Clara put her arm through mine, laughing uproariously. Suddenly she stopped, looked at me pleadingly and said,

"Please Tui, be nice to Earl. I'm really in love with him – and Daisy, she's a good sort, really. I know you'll like them when you get to know them better."

"Perhaps, but I think I'm right. You know I won't make any trouble, Clara. You and I have been good pals for too long."

She hugged me and went in to join the din. We drank, played games, danced and a few even swam. I didn't join in much, just drank and played a watchful game. Clara was seldom from Pearson's side – they danced or just sat and petted – and Clara had her fair share of drinks. I noticed that he drank very little. Daisy Devoe was also watchful and drank little. She played the games mostly and watched me and Clara. Devoe and Pearson were not "in" together – each had their own little scheme going and when all came out in the open later, boy oh boy they were some schemes.

I didn't enjoy that weekend much – it certainly wasn't like old times. A large number of little things were adding up to an imminent climax to the situation. I noticed Clara was drinking more than usual, but seemed so happy with this set-up I really hoped it would work out. The old buddyship between us was

gone and, although I missed it greatly, in some ways its loss eased my situation – leaving me more free to pick up the threads of my own badly neglected career. As I was upset the liquor didn't help and I felt lousy. I was talking to some people some time after nightfall, when I noticed Clara had disappeared and both Pearson and Devoe were nowhere in sight. I went upstairs and saw Pearson sitting in a lounge chair; we didn't speak as I went into Clara's bedroom. Devoe was helping her to undress, while Clara mumbled something I couldn't make out. Devoe, ignoring me, said,

“It's alright Clara, just putting you to bed for a little rest.”

Clara finally focused on me and slurred,

“Hi, Too, get's a 'hic' drink, huh?”

I'd had more than enough myself, but was still in better shape than Clara; I glared at both of them, flopped on a chair and retorted,

“Get it your bloody self,” and glared some more.

I was waiting for Devoe to say something – for a minute I thought she would – but she kept quiet. Clara was mumbling and I made out the word “ring”. Then I remembered something with a jolt that almost sobered me. Clara threw valuable jewellery to others as though it was confetti, but had almost none herself – just piles of costume jewellery which was of little value. She had bought one very valuable perfect blue white five-carat diamond ring which she loved and said would “do her for the good stuff”. It was not on her hand now and neither was she wearing her wristwatch or bracelet, both of which were quite valuable, although not in the class of the ring. I sat on the bed and asked Clara what she had done with her jewellery. She looked stupidly at her hand, then at Devoe, who I noticed, had not said a word and was a little flushed around the neck. I was preparing to get stuck into her when she anticipated me and beat me to speech.

“Oh, don't worry Clara. I've got your jewellery in my pocket, see?”

She took out a handkerchief and undid it to reveal the valuables. I left the room, grumbling,

“You’d better watch it —” but I think Clara was already asleep.

As I returned downstairs the place seemed overcrowded. I loved most of the people there, but made up my mind to return to Hollywood at about ten thirty that night. Fortunately a friend dissuaded me .and I lay down to sleep it off.

I awoke early, feeling ghastly - I wanted a drink, but thought better of it. Nothing stirred in the house and suddenly I wanted out and away. I’d only partly undressed so I soon had my bag and quietly left without waking anyone. The new desk clerk at the hotel, brother of the actor, Lucien Littlefield, was pleasant and, as I got my key, informative. Mr Bow was not in our suite, and hadn’t been all night. “Aha!” I thought. “Cat’s away and the mice (more like rats) will play.” Dear Bob was not expecting me home until Sunday night and it was now early Sunday morning. Shrugging my shoulders I made for the elevator and in less than ten minutes was enjoying a hot shower. I ordered food and the Sunday papers to be sent up and enjoyed the luxury of a peaceful and restful Sunday. They were seldom possible. I think I made up my mind firmly that day, to divorce Bob. I’d already heard rumours from friends about his other women, but hadn’t really let it bother me.

Bob hurried in at about five and fussed around asking questions to which he received short answers. but I did tell him what was going on at Malibu and that I had had no reason to change my poor opinion of Clara’s choice of new friends. I could see he was worried and felt sorry for him. I know he loved Clara deeply and was sincere in his efforts to save her from hurt. Her infatuation for this man seemed out of all proportion. Bob had tackled him about his married status and Pearson told him divorce proceedings had been started. When the divorce was through he said he hoped to marry Clara. News had filtered through to the studio - rumour went that Devoe opened her mouth too much, which was easy to believe in the light of later

events between her and Clara. But the die was cast and neither Bob or I could help Clara now. The studio tried, but she flounced out, saying her private life was hers alone - an illusion held by most stars at one time or another who, believing this, usually came a cropper! I also reiterated to Bob that unless our relationship improved we would have to do something about it.

Fortunately I had some film work to keep me busy and I was also rehearsing for my singing radio program, which was to start soon. Bob also was busy, but I didn't know at what - we saw little of each other. I spoke to Clara once or twice on the telephone and she asked me to come to dinner when I could make it. We were cool, but not unfriendly. I was still suspicious of Bob's erratic comings and goings, so decided to do something about it when I had the time.

Soon I was involved with another series of one-act plays which took most of my time, day and night. Among my friends was a sprinkling of new faces and times became bit brighter. Once more I got into the habit of theatregoing, for I loved it so and saw some fine artists in great plays. I must mention a few, although I can't remember them in order after all this time. I've already mentioned Jeanne Eagels in *Rain*. I saw the magnificent Florence Reed in my friend, John Colton's *The Shanghai Gesture* more than once at the El Capitan, Helen Hayes in *Mary Queen of Scots* at the Biltmore Theatre in downtown L.A., Lynn Fontaine and Alfred Lunt in *Idiots Delight* - a joy, although *The Guardsmen* will always be my favorite of their incredible work together - Pauline Frederick in *Madam X* (which, when done by others became pure corn, but when she did it one was left misty) Alla Nazimova in her delicately drawn Ibsen, *Dolls House* and *Ghosts*. I'll also never forget Katherine Cornell in Shaw's *Joan of Arc*. Miss Cornell never relented and would not join the cinema, as the English love to call it, no matter how hard the big boys tried to entice her.

There were many splendid plays and players - Edward Everett Horton and a few light comedians introduced "stock"

type shows in a small theatre on Vine Street – in fact several theatres were being opened and we theatre lovers were well catered to. The most memorable extravaganza I witnessed, however, was a few years after I plunged into that state of mind called Hollywood. A famous European entrepreneur named Max Reinhardt brought the play, *The Miracle*, over. It could only be performed in three or four theatres in America, as it needed a revolving stage, which was very scarce world-wide in the twenties. The set was continued along the side of the theatre proper and the aisles also were used, for streams of nuns and altar boys carrying lighted candles. They entered at the front of the theatre and moved down onto the stage which was “set” as a nun’s chapel. Unfortunately I’ve lost the program and have forgotten at which theatre they were able to play, but, I think it was the Cathay Circle. I adored it all and sat silent, for once, and enthralled. *The Miracle* was made into a movie. but an unsuccessful one, which was understandable. The two main stars in the movie were Iris Tree, who played a wayward nun and Lady Diana Manners, who played the Virgin Mary. The story would be considered ludicrous now, but was very effective then. A young novice had left the convent without leave and “fallen by the wayside” as we once soulfully put it. Her “sisters” seem unaware of her fate as they pray in unison by candlelight in their chapel. One dramatic scene has the “novice” alone on her knees in front of a large statue of the Virgin Mary, desperately imploring aid. She rises, makes a dramatically hopeless exit through a side door into the cold cruel world. After numerous chants by the nuns, moving up and down the aisles and the stage, the stage revolves again to the statue. The chapel is empty and the side door opens slowly to admit the “novice”, creeping in with her new born baby in her arms. Dressed in bedraggled peasant clothes, head still shorn, she is a pitiful sight and the effect is heightened by a raging electric storm rising to a violent crescendo outside. The many lighting and sound effects bemused the audience with a hypnotic effect. Suddenly the

“novice” raised the bundled baby high above her head toward the outstretched arms of the statue... a tremendous burst of thunder and lightning brings utter darkness, followed by the stage being suddenly brilliantly lit. The silence was nerve shattering. The “novice”, dressed in her nun’s habit is prostrate before the statue which now holds the baby in her arms - Mother and Child - the “Miracle”. The curtain falls as the nuns file into the chapel, singing praises, while the figure remains motionless in front of the statue. Big Deal! you say? It sure as hell was then and I’ll never forget it:

The one-act plays did well. Young Lloyd Pantages was a tower of strength as a manager and we mostly had fine casts. Some of the plays were good, some weak , but that is always the way. Conditions in the Bow menage had worsened. Although Bob and I still shared quarters at the Warner-Kelton, we seldom ran into each other. We’d finished our run of plays and were discussing another lot, with two weeks break in between. I made a decision to do something about Bob. Friends had informed me that Bob escorted a number of little “dears” to the Malibu beach house on week nights. My friends agreed to accompany me on an espionage foray. Taking a powerful torch, we screeched down to Malibu in my racer. As we neared Clara’s place I killed the engine and doused the lights. We walked a small distance in the darkness - it was close to midnight (when else?). Knowing the lay of the land, (a very daring expression in those days - think about it) I took my co-conspirators unerringly to a rear window which was nearly always left open. The soft sand silenced any noise of footsteps - needlessly, for the sounds emerging from the double-bed were fast and furious, to say nothing of the grunts, groans, snorts and squeals of delight, which, since time immemorial, seem to denote the heavenly heights of passion in extremis. I think we all wanted to giggle - I know I did, instead I flashed the torch with deadly “western” accuracy, due to long intimacy with fire arms. I also added a blood curdling yell, with lovely effect. The strong torch light hit



Tui at the time of her divorce (*Los Angeles Evening Post-Record* 6 July 1929)

dead centre – two of the barest asses any of us are ever likely to see. Both parties made a concerted dive to get under the bed, but instead collided in mid-air, ending up on the floor in an utter confusion of tangled bare limbs. Taking pity on them, I doused the torch and, trying not to break into hysterics until out of earshot, yelled dire threats of coming divorce proceedings to the wildly tossing Pacific. We didn't hang around, but ran to the car and careered off towards Hollywood between gusts of laughter.

For me the Bow-tie" was nearly cut and it left me, strangely, with nostalgia for it and for them – loving

memories, but I doubt those feelings were reciprocated for some time, anyway, as some months later a kindly California judge granted me a divorce from Bob for mental cruelty. Nevertheless he really did get off lightly, for I was always like the Dorothy in

Anita Loos' *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* - ending up with a kiss on the hand and little else. Bob was ordered to pay thirty six dollars a week rent on our former love nest for eighteen months and the divorce costs. By Hollywood standards, even in those "piker" days, it was little and would hardly provide dog food today and that was okay by me. Any Hollywoodites from those days still getting around without a keeper, who may then have whispered behind their bedecked fingers that "I believe she took Bow for a bundle" can contact me and I will supply them with the divorce attorney's name and also a writ or two.³⁷

Gossip flew thick and fast and not only about my divorce. Paramount Studios were making alarming noises as bits and pieces of this carefree bacchanal wafted through to them, partly via their own mysterious grapevine. (Any movie studio of the era would proudly boast that Alcatraz - at that time the pride of San Francisco Bay - that thought it had a better grapevine than theirs was living in a fool's paradise and I agree). It seems that the studio had been putting aside five hundred dollars each week into a trust fund for Clara, to save for a "rainy day". I have a press clipping of one of Lolly Parsons' columns, copyright 1931, which gave this information to anyone interested. Thirty thousand dollars had been accumulated in this way, but suddenly it was all gone and so was Clara's ever-lovin' Earl, to Europe, yet also gone was Earl Pearson's long-suffering wife, who had threatened to sue for divorce, naming Clara as co-respondent. So you see, we all had a great deal to think about and the gossips plenty to whisper about.

I was so worked up about it all that I decided a few gins would help take my mind off the long boring drive to Malibu that weekend - just to say "I told you so" and that I could also see other little "screamers" ahead, even if I was planning on leaving the fold. I felt my indignation was justified, but, boy, before that weekend was finished there was to be quite a bit of justified indignation around. For a start, when I arrived, well-primed with gin and ill-will towards a number of people who seemed to have

taken over from out of nowhere, the first person I bumped into was Daisy Devoe. That certainly didn't brighten my day. The joint was jumping as usual and Clara was dancing her fool head off, showing no sign of heart-burn or loss, except for the elusive thirty thousand - I heartily agreed with her that Pearson was no loss. She spotted me and "shuffled off to Buffalo" in my direction.

"You've heard," she claimed - our inevitable brilliant conversation was on again.

"Heard what?" from me.

"That I'm in love again, silly. Isn't it wonderful? Oh, what's this I hear about you and Dad getting a divorce? It's not true of course - I won't have it." She started to dance away as if nothing had happened.

"Hold it - goddamn hold it right there!" I yelled. "I see you only got rid of, or would it be better to say taken by, one of the classy duo." I was glaring meaningfully in Devoe's direction. "So, who's the new cute customer, or are you only in love with love this time?" I asked sarcastically.

"Don't be silly, Tui. You wouldn't know him, but I guess you've heard of him, on stage and records, I mean. He's a singer - got a divine voice, too."

I reeled back - all divine male singers were but one voice to me and I was mad about him - I guess its lucky for him he never met me, he only saw me once - name of Bing Crosby. I gasped,

"You never - you haven't - oh God, I don't believe it." I sat down suddenly and gulped a revive.

Clara pouted at me, remarking,

"What's got into you lately. I can't make you out at all. I'm talking about Harry Richman - if you'd been in the house lately you'd have met him."

I gurgled with relief for Mr Crosby's sake, although it was bandied about, mostly in music circles, that he could kick up a fair pair of heels himself, occasionally, if so inclined.

By this time Clara and I were sitting down having quite a few revivers and getting a full head of steam in the process. One word led to another (I suppose there are folk who have not had this happen to them, but I've only met them in convents) and I told Clara very definitely that Bob and I were through and getting a divorce. I also said I had a few personal items at her place and would pick them up on the way home, leaving the key to her house under the mat. We glared at each other, although the focus was definitely not good on either side. I started to say I didn't see why we could not still be buddies and see each other occasionally, but my "old buddies" expression was far from friendly and I could see someone had been working on her to fan the hostility between us; also I'd had enough drinks not to give a damn anyway. Clara glared, still out of focus,

"We're through then. I'll say goodbye and you can leave the key on the table." She turned away, then, as an afterthought, swung back to me nastily, "I hope you don't think you're going to get big sums of alimony like some are doing in this town - Dad's money is all tied up and he hasn't any, anyway, of his own."

That did it: I drew my arm back to beat her one, thought better of it and, as the red flame began to clear from my eyes, I grabbed my hand bag and jacket and staggered half blindly out of the beach house, got into my car and roared off to Bedford Drive, muttering dire threats through gin tears the whole journey.

Screeching to an abrupt halt, I scrambled out and rushed into the empty house. I found it difficult to work the key in the front door, but finally managed and bumped down the passageway to the bedroom, collected a few undies and personal bits and pieces. There was not much and I still wish I'd left it there and gone straight to the hotel. Unfortunately on my way out I noticed the door of the Chinese Room was open and there, standing on a huge easel, was an enormous photograph of Clara; it must have been six or eight feet high. Her face winked and smiled down at

me and I saw red again. I am still ashamed, rightly, of the havoc I wreaked in that room and more particularly on the photograph, on that Sunday afternoon. I make no excuses for myself. Yes, I had had too much to drink and resentments had been building up – certainly I thought my indignation justified, but the act is still inexcusable. By nature I abhor vandalism and therefore don't consider myself a vandal, but since then I judge nobody because that was an atrocious act of vandalism – all the more tragic because Clara, my dear buddy, and I were never to meet again, nor even see each other; I never apologised and that's what I'm doing now. Somewhere in that “sound-stage in the sky” I can hear her laughing in that tinkling way she had and saying,

“Never mind ole buddy. C'mon Tui, let's have a snort; it was only a silly old picture anyway.”

Clara gave the world a lot of happiness in her day and got precious little in return. We were lucky to have had several years of fond friendship, which was genuine and sincere on my part and, until toward the end, on Clara's too. Daisy Devoc? The newspaper morgue would reveal her perfidy in publishing a vile pamphlet, for which she was punished by the law.³⁸ Doubtless the Pearsons prospered, undeservedly, although I don't know or care what happened to them.³⁹ Mr Harry Richman can't have been the man for Clara as the newspapers revealed one day that he had left her and she, poor, lonely, seeking kid, cut her wrists, but not fatally. The next news I heard was that Clara had married an unknown, “drugstore cowboy” trying for the bigtime, one Rex Bell. She retired from pictures and bought a two hundred and fifty thousand dollar ranch at a place called Search Light, Nevada, moved there and had two sons. I was truly happy for her – “at last,” I thought, “our dear, mad cap redhead has found her man and the happiness she always dreamed of,” but I should have known better. I know most of her sad life, but by this time I was far away, so I can't write of it, only to say that Clara's marriage didn't remain happy and an attempted comeback to the movies failed.⁴⁰

Thus, the “golden years” had run out and sound slowly began slowing “motion” pictures down into stodgy, wordy and, in many cases dreary and joyless, media that gave scant entertainment to the many who had understood and loved the fast movement, which needed little concentration to take them for a few hours into a land of make believe where they could forget their worries, troubles, or their dreary lives. I moved away from the Warner-Kelton Hotel and went back only once, some years later, for a short visit, but not long after that I left Hollywood and don’t know if it still exists – the hotel I mean.⁴¹

CHAPTER NINETEEN

A new phase began in my life, with new friends and, for a time, it seemed my career had taken an “upswing” – and it had, but all too briefly. The singing half-hour for radio KFVB Warner Brothers, went over well. I was backed by three black musicians who went under the name of Three Aces. I’ve no idea if they were the same people who later became the Four Aces, but they probably were. The pianist was a stout woman, but I don’t remember their individual names, they appeared indifferent and disinterested in me and we had little contact beyond the show and very few rehearsals.⁴²

Despite the fact that the recording boys who put it all together on records did me the honour to remark that I had the best ballad singing voice they had ever recorded and should be doing better things, the station and I mutually called it quits and my “spot” was taken over by the Boswell Sisters who went on to international fame. They in turn were followed by the Andrew Sisters, whom I admired greatly. I did better singing with my own pianist, a dour, tragic man called Jack McGuire, but I still stuck more with stage and pictures.

I rented a nice apartment at the Somerset and became deeply immersed in the plays, doing some “talkie” parts – bits and

pieces – on the side. It seemed strange that the people engaging me at this time, wanted the talents which I was growing out of, stunt work, little sad ingenues or little bad ingenues. My dream was still the same and I worked hard at learning the art – to be a good, if not great, tragedienne. I guess I made it too, in a couple of plays. They were not on, or even “off” Broadway, but only in small theatres in down town L.A. At that time it had to at least be “off” Broadway to be noticed, so that was that.

I was still meeting interesting people, if only briefly. A couple I knew invited me to a small luncheon down near the beach at Dick Barthelmess’ place. I had not met him before and he was much as he appeared on screen; a quiet, unsmiling, almost brooding man. His wife was back east at the time, but he was a good host and I enjoyed talking to him. We had at least one mutual friend, the grand Lillian Gish, with whom he’d worked in earlier times. I still have a tiny silver match box he gave me, with his initials R.S.B. on it. Richard Dix was at the luncheon too. I’ve already mentioned that he was a favourite of mine. His autographed picture is one of those treasured among the many still in my possession.

I look back and am grateful for the incredible chance to meet, if only briefly in some cases, such marvellous people who put the breath of life into that preposterous business of movie making. One night some friends drove me out to James Cruze’s ranch house in the then sparsely populated San Fernando Valley. James was one of the really good directors whom I feel has been much overlooked by movie historians. He had been married earlier to an actress of early days, Marguerite Snow and they had a daughter, Julie, now grown up, whom I knew. She was there that night. Our acquaintance didn’t continue long and I don’t think she ever took to movies. The lady who was James Cruze’s wife that night, though, had been a great deal in pictures and also a favourite of mine, Miss Betty Compson, a fine actress, an accomplished violinist and a lovely person. It is a pleasure to remember her.

I tested for a part with Bob Woolsey, of Wheeler and Woolsey. Mr Woolsey was kind and helpful, but I felt uncomfortable in the gig – a sort of comic dance thing. Woolsey was small and slight and I kept thinking we would fall over and I'd flatten him, so we gave up, which is a shame as it was for the highly successful show, *Rio Rita*.

I had a bit part with Ina Claire, a very smart lady, even if she was silly enough to marry Jack Gilbert. Joan Blondell was also in the show and I found her attitude to be distinctly “up-stage”. I didn't like her any more than she seemed to like anybody less than a “super-star” as they are so amusingly called today. It seems silly that some people ruin their screen image when one meets them in person, I know she'll be devastated that I survived as she seems to have done. I was also called to be in some scenes in an early talkie with Charles Boyer and Claudette Colbert, mostly, I gathered, because my surname was Lorraine – it was a French picture. The same thing happened to me in a Maurice Chevalier picture. Boyer and Colbert were a lovely duo during the little I had to do with them, but I'll let Chevalier lie in peace – perhaps World War Two is still too close to me.⁴³



Charles Boyer



Claudette Colbert

There are so many to remember from then. One is Ethel Waters, who was distinctly unfriendly to whites, but I admired her work tremendously. I wonder if this awful racism will ever end. But I did make one friend, whose attitude to me was not unfriendly despite my white skin. I've never been interested in prize fighting in any form, except occasionally going, on invitation, to the fights at American Legion Stadium in Hollywood. I can't say I approve of seeing one human being beating the hell out of another, with the almost inevitable resultant brain damage to one or the other, in the name of sport, but naturally the huge sums of money were the main drawcard to most people then, as now. But I wouldn't have missed going, if only to see Mae West arrive and teeter sown the aisle - don't, for heavens sake, get me wrong, I don't think Mae ever took to drink, but she is so tiny, which was a surprise, she wore very built-up shoes, which gave her that distinctive walk and fascinating movement of her famous derriere, which was so admired by all and sundry.

I have already mentioned that while at the Warner-Kelton I had need of a doctor's services. A small surgery was located around the corner on Vine street and I became quite good friends with the older of the two doctors who occupied it. He was an extremely interesting old gentleman, Dr Eisenman, who fascinated me with his yarns. A natural raconteur, his stories of the fight against yellow fever (also known as Yellow Jack) whilst the Panama Canal was being built, held me spellbound. He had been one of several doctors at the Canal zone, trying to keep the fever in check and save the lives of those unfortunate enough to contract it. He claimed, though, that it was very nearly a lost cause and many lives were lost.

Further up Vine Street, another friend of Dr Eisenman's, the former World Champion Heavyweight fighter, Jess Willard, had built and opened what I believe was Hollywood's first large supermarket. Although Farmers was built in my time in Hollywood and I believe, is now the super to beat all

supermarkets, it wasn't in existence at the time I'm writing about. Jess was a huge, good natured fellow, who often dropped in for a yarn with the Doc and often I was doing the same thing, so I got to know Jess on friendly terms. The strange thing is that in my years in Hollywood I was to meet and know four of the world's greatest heavyweight prize fighters of all time, without ever having the slightest interest in prize-fighting.

Within a relatively short time of my arrival in California, while I was still doing a fair bit of picture work out the valley way, I was taken to a modest, almost sad little speakeasy, owned and run by the great Gentleman Jim Corbett. We loved him and sat drinking his hooch all night, just to hear him talk. It was worth it. In less than a year he was dead.

Jack Dempsey was still world champion the first time I met him. He was M.C. for a charity benefit; he was polite, but brusque. We met several times while doing various charity benefits and similar things and we said "hello" but didn't take to each other. I never did dine at his "eatery" in New York and I read recently that things weren't going too well for him, for which I'm sorry. Jack had a small hotel in those days, near Echo Lake Park, between Hollywood and Los Angeles. His sister, Elsie, who lived there, was a swell girl, who did "bits" and extra work in pictures. We liked each other after becoming acquainted at work and I often gave her a lift home from MGM, Culver City, but we later lost touch. I sure hope she fared better than Jack seems to have done.

I've left the one I knew best and loved most, until last - the one, the only, great Jack Johnson. I deeply regret letting my brother talk me into relinquishing the large and friendly autographed picture of Jack, which I had for years. The picture disappeared long ago, left carelessly in some hotel or remote showground, just forgotten, but I remember Jack and his wide grin as though it was yesterday. It happened this way. I've mentioned a friend and neighbour who was married to an Englishman; they had two children, who were just tots then. The

father was a Burlington-Bertie type actor, as was his father before him. Unfortunately Bertie, as I'll call my friend's husband, was not very successful, nor was he any sort of provider for his family. He would disappear for months on end, even a year, then turn up casually saying he'd been in Africa, India, South America, or any old place. He could have made the "slammer" for all we knew. My friend, also from a showbiz family, was a damned good dancer and talented all-round performer. She worked for Fanchon and Marco and other similar shows, doing live performances before the top-class film came on at such theatres as Grauman's Chinese, Cathay Circle and some posh down-town theatres. She also did the same work in many of the thirties musicals making some with extremely big names. Occasionally still I see her dearly remembered face slip by on a late movie on Television. It was fortunate she could get so much of this work, being the sole breadwinner for herself and her little boy and girl.

One night while she was having dinner at home with me she told me she had become friendly with Irene, who was at that time, Jack's wife. The lady was from a white socialite family back east and unfortunately they were against the marriage - need I say more? Except that I do believe we were a damn sight more tolerant of each other in the late twenties and thirties than we seem to be today. My friend liked Irene and Jack and they had invited her to bring a friend to dinner at their pleasant apartment. She knew I'd lived among South Sea Islanders and liked many dark races, so she asked me to go with her. I was delighted to accept. Of course they had to live in what, in polite circles, is known as the "negro quarter"; we ascended a few floors by elevator in a quiet, large brick apartment house. Irene opened the door, an attractive, soft-spoken and gracious lady. She offered us cocktails and we sat, conversing easily and pleasantly. She told us Jack would be home shortly; he was doing some business on a classy "night club" he hoped to open on New Years Eve, a date fast approaching. It had to be in the coloured

quarter, naturally - one didn't have to pass City Hall to know why, even at that time.

A key grated in the lock and a huge dark man entered, his well-known features splitting in a smile of welcome at us. We had a superb and beautifully served dinner with much laughter and good humour. Later, smoking and talking, Jack told me of his unfortunate experiences when he visited Australia early this century. I had not yet been to Australia. I told Jack, however, of Queensland Harry and what a great hero New Zealanders had made of him because of his unequalled horse riding. I also told him how we revered the Maories then - I did and still do - that racism as such, was unheard of in the beautiful "shaky isles". Jack sighed, his smiling face sombre for a second,

"Never mind," he grinned again, "someday I guess they'll get it all sorted out."

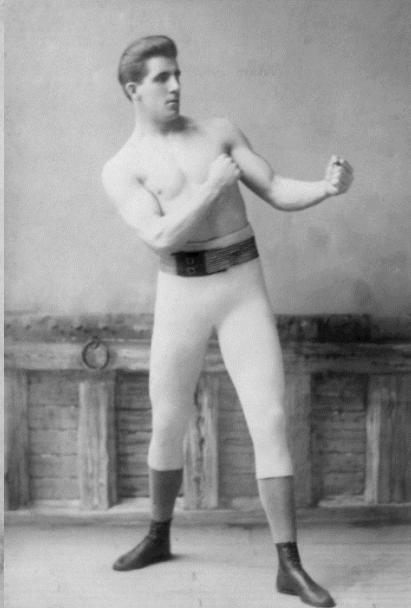
We all said "amen" to that. ("It's been forty or more years since then, Jack, what do you think up there?")

As we left Jack invited us both to bring a companion and attend the club opening on New Years Eve. We accepted with alacrity. My friend, her kids and I intended to spend Christmas together, so the night at the club would make a nice climax to the festivities. She was flat out making ends meet, hard as she worked. Being alone, I had an easier time, although I still sent every extra cent I could to New Zealand, but for Christmas we pitched in together, I supplied the usual turkey and trimmings, with plenty of food and toys for the wee ones and a few "Tom and Jerries" for my friend and myself. It was a homey and happy Christmas.

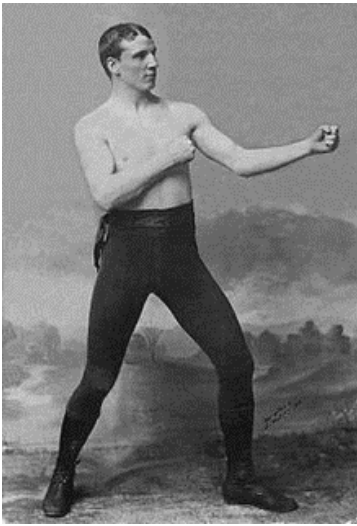
On New Years Eve we picked up a couple of happy male escorts and whizzed off to Jack Johnson's gala club opening. It certainly was a grand affair. A high percentage of white people, with lots of big showbusiness names among the black people, filled the place to capacity. Later in the evening I had an experience which made it an extra exciting night for me.



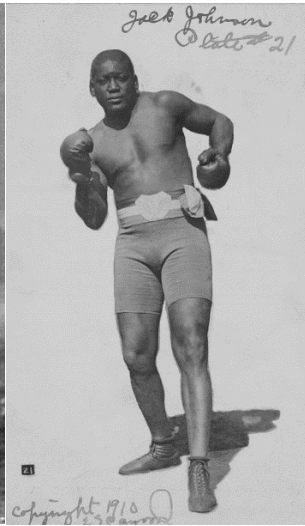
Jess Willard



Jim Corbett



Jack Dempsey



Jack Johnson

I've forgotten the current dance craze, but we were at it non-stop and feeling a trifle weary after the "midnight" doings, I excused myself and went to the powder room. An elderly attendant, sitting in a corner, began to rise, but I said,

"Don't bother, I'm just going to rest my feet for a few minutes."

An impressive settee set right in the centre of the room faced a large mirror. A normal, push up window was set fairly near the mirror and stood open just a little at the bottom. The back of the settee was to the door that gave entrance to the room. I'd just settled down to relax for a minute when I heard a shot, a scuffle and the door crashed open, a man's figure hurtled into the room, leaped over the settee, me included, frozen to the spot, eyes wide with terror. The little negro lady attendant, to her credit, stayed just as she was and didn't utter a sound. The man plunged to the window, flung it wide and leapt through it to disappear into the darkness. I have no idea if he was black, white, polka dotted or purple, but I guess I was a kind of pea green.

Soon the room was full of people asking questions. I still had no idea what it was all about, so I rejoined my friend, who told me some people had entered late and an argument ensued. Nobody knew who had fired the shot and no one was injured. The police came and went. The affair had nothing to do with Jack or his club; just one of those things which are never properly explained. Soon the party was hopping again and we went on to the wee small hours. I saw Irene and Jack little after this. Somehow the club was not really a success - too much "depression" I think. My friend told me some months later the Johnsons had called her to say goodbye. They were going east and perhaps to Europe where blacks were better received. Until a few years ago, when I read that Jack had died, I heard no more of them. Jess Willard told me himself, though, that Jack HAD to "lie down", making Willard the winner in their title bout. It was either "lie down" for Jack or he would have been shot from the audience.

CHAPTER TWENTY

It was 1932 and we were still on the good old “stand-bys”, a season of fire one-act plays. We played a couple of nights in a small Beverly Hills auditorium and went over big. It was the first time I had seen Mischa Auer, who was not yet in American movies. He played a heavy Russian part in a play we did at the Beverly Hills Hotel – certainly a very different character from what he was to play in movies. It was during these plays that a man came into my life and he was to change it forever. He had written and was directing one of the plays, which starred Priscilla Dean and Carlyle Moore Jr and was very good. We were doing only three plays in this run instead of the usual four.

I was an onlooker that night, so relaxed and visited with the other actors. I had met the man before, in fact I was sure he had purposely put himself in my way several times. He had a very responsible position at MGM – he was the purchasing agent. I know L.B. Mayer put great store by him, for Sol Clark spent millions for the studio each year without a question from anybody. However, Sol had a poet’s mind, loved writing and would have liked to get into the production side. He was in his forties, rather short, very good looking, softly spoken and a real southerner.

I was rather brusque with him for some weeks, although he brought his play to our playhouse and also to several small theatres we played just for a chance to be near me. Apart from his job at the studio, I knew little about him except that he lived out the valley way. My comparatively recently gained freedom was very precious to me and I had no intention of getting involved with anyone so soon, so I viewed the obvious attentions of this very charming and important man with a jaundiced eye and rejected his many invitations to dinner at the film city’s best dining places, but finally capitulated to the extent that I invited him to afternoon tea at my apartment. And that, my friends, is exactly what he did get – my maid was in attendance with instructions not to leave the premises until my guest had gone.

Yep, I can hear the hoots of laughter, but it is true, even if slightly ridiculous. Minnie, my friend and helper for ten years, can vouch for it.

Much later, Sol Clark and I laughed heartily remembering that first afternoon, as he had a very good bottle of bourbon whisky in his car, never dreaming I was serious about the afternoon tea, but I was and he left after tea and a chat, kissing my hand at the door. A few days later a huge bunch of gorgeous flowers arrived, accompanied by a note thanking me and asking wouldn't I please reconsider dinner, he felt he owed it to me. Of course I went. He took me to a splendid French restaurant and talked me into eating frogs' legs, the one and only time in my life, I must add, but the snails? No way! No amount of cajoling, "the snails only lived on bran, my French blood was at stake", nothing would get me to consume snails. I even had to pretend to myself the frogs' legs were chicken. However the delicious Chateau Yquem, a white Bordeaux wine, made up for much and sure helped keep everything else down. I was partial to a good white wine and Sol had discovered this lovely one in France during World War One.

That was the beginning of my relationship with the only man I really loved. Looking back I realise there was still much of the father-image, but I loved him - deeply; a fact not unnoticed by most of the hierarchy I still knew in Hollywood. Of course, he was married and of course he couldn't get a divorce right then, but he said and I believe it, that he and his wife had not lived as such for years. there were no children, but his wife's mother lived with them and he was very fond of her; she was frail and aged and adored him, even if the wife didn't. He claimed he'd gradually break the news and we'd marry. I gathered this information in bits and pieces over the first year. I may not give the impression of being the shy sort, but I am, very, and was more so then. Infatuated, I guess I was embarrassed to "pry" too much. It was wonderful to just be happy and feel loved. We'd talk about it all from time to time, but just drifted on. Being a

hot-shot business man Sol said paying rent was “nutty” and talked me into buying a sweet little cottage on a nice piece of land near the top of Beachwood Drive under the huge Hollywoodland sign. Quite correctly he said I could have owned a mansion with the money I’d paid in high rents for years. The cottage was nicely furnished with a piano, music everywhere, sunny and blissfully happy.

My happiness lasted just under five years, but much happened in this time. I had a substantial monthly bill to meet – payments on property, daily maid’s salary, the upkeep on a smart sports car, expensive clothing, which was mostly sports or evening gear. I was a “party at home or a friend’s place” girl and not too keen on night spots or the cocktail set. Like so many people I loathed big parties. A gathering with a few intimates is far more enjoyable and also made for less publicity if you put a hole in your manners or fell flat on your face. Many did it then as now, but most won’t admit it. I do – partly because I vowed this story would be as close to the whole truth as possible – I was drinking too much and never drank alone if I could avoid it (still don’t), so most people knew it. I always loved a “gang” around and the “gang” included a fair slice of the world.

Sol knew I needed a regular salary, so obtained work at MGM for me occasionally, but by far my dearest and kindest friend in the work area, was Woody Van Dyke II, who was known for doing everything he could to keep old show-biz people in work – old-timers he and his parents had worked with in stock companies on the west coast and others like me born in the business, knowing no other – he kept us together as a team. Woody had become a big and respected director now at MGM, but hadn’t changed at all from the handsome, rather shy man I’d met with the “lady piano player” years before.

His list of films is impressive, *White Shadows of the South Seas* (remember, he’d offered me the lead in this one), *Trader Horn*, *Cuban Love Song*, *Eskimo*, the *Thin Man* series,⁴⁴ Garbo’s *The Painted Veil*, *Naughty Marietta* and most of the

MacDonald-Nelson Eddy musicals, *San Francisco*; the list is endless and he was the most prolific and consistent money-maker of them all. He was also renowned for keeping the costs down by finishing on schedule, helped along by “one-shot” takes, instead of endless retakes.

My first stint with him in “talkies” was in *Never the Twain Shall Meet* starring Leslie Howard. God! He was absent minded and nearly caused Woody to lose his cool – a very unusual event. Woody was one of the “coolest cats” you’d ever meet; unlike most directors who acted like frustrated actors. Leslie was forgetful, silent and forever seemed to be somewhere else, not in this visible world. I wonder if he had a premonition of his strange ending in that plane crash during World War Two? He constantly left what seemed to be his only pair of glasses at home, so that they had to be sent for, along with just about everything else, clothes, script, the lot. It was an intimate scene. Woody simply sat in his chair to wait, seeming to doze, but I’m sure I heard an occasional “Oh sheeit”; Leslie fiddled with desk objects in stony-faced silence. I was, at that time, the only other actor on the set, so effaced myself to a dark corner, sat and brooded. The “grips” and other crew members got right away and like the sensible folk they are, played penny poker. Karen Morley, a pleasant lass, and Conchita Montenegro were also in the film, but not on this set, so I continued brooding, “what has the business come to?” With early sound you wouldn’t believe the “goings on” to get the damn sound on film. It was funny in retrospect, but not to me then. A telephone booth affair was on the set and we actors were jammed into it to speak our lines through its heavy microphone apparatus, off camera. Mr Howard picked up his telephone, or switched on a dictaphone and my voice came through. The whole business was cumbersome, tinny and slow moving. I propped my chin on my hand, face cloudy, thoughts heavy.

Of course I wasn’t the only person brooding at this time. Much heart-burn had been suffered on the subject of the great

Garbo, but she had passed the test to successfully make the transition to sound, with flying colours, in *Anna Christie* and so had Marie Dressler, whom I always was crazy about. Still, nostalgia persisted - I hankered hopelessly for the old silent days, particularly at Universal. Uncle Carl Laemmle was so proud of his studio, and rightly so, that he personally conducted any visiting celebrities on a tour to show off his plant (and I don't mean Laura La, either, although she was a dear and with us a great deal) but Uncle Carl had done a great job in California and liked to preen a little.

I had a helluva thrill the day Uncle Carl brought one distinguished group to visit and lunch in our fine commissary. In the group was the soft eyed Albert Einstein, his wife and a couple of others connected with his work. Also with them was our own Charles Spencer Chaplin. I gathered Einstein was on a lecture tour of California and visiting Mr Chaplin. I certainly was not important enough to meet the great man, but was at least close enough to hear his tattered English and look into those glorious dark eyes, which could see the Universe in the centre of an atom.⁴⁵

I still remembered the Hollywood Royals, Doug and Mary visiting Mary Philbin on her set and the excitement they brought with them. I missed the free and easy admittance, the long row of equal (in importance) dressing rooms, everyone hailing each other as we passed. I missed chatting to "Hooter" Hoot Gibson, Slim Summerville, Lon Chaney's friendly sound advice. Dear Lon, he had come over to MGM and had recently passed away. We were well into the '30's as I sighed in retrospect. I thought of my first boyfriend, Lew Penn and the exciting and carefree rides on his motorcycle. This brought me to the present man in my life, Sol. Did I really love him? I was pretty sure I did. He certainly interested me very much, I enjoyed being escorted by a mature, educated man to the theatre, French restaurants, "sans" frogs legs of course, but that Chateau Yquem white wine from Bordeaux, I won't forget it; but you'd better, today. I priced

it four days ago and only the last of the millionaire “big spenders” could afford it.

I think I must have been dozing as well as day-dreaming, for suddenly the lights flooded the set. I straightened up, Woody opened one eye, which could have been slightly open the whole time; Leslie absently took the spectacles handed to him, rose and started to leave the set. Woody strolled after him, took him by the arm and returned him to the desk where our scene took place; not a word was spoken. Yes, he was a cool one, our Woody.

Another interesting experience I had in 1931 came back to me during the filming of this picture. I was invited to see a play called *The Last Mile*, the story of a condemned man on his last walk to the electric chair. The man playing the lead role was unknown to our group – in fact he was unknown, period. The four or five with me agreed upon the excellence of his acting, but we reacted differently and violently on his lasting quality and whether or not he was good movie material. None of us agreed on all points. One woman was adamant, even vehement about his qualities, acting, looks, personality and “difference”. She even vowed he, if given the opportunity, would become the greatest male attraction in movies since Valentino, whom he resembled not the slightest. I was the worst offender, saying he probably would find it tough to make the back “lot”. I hang my head in shame. Soon after the Leslie Howard flick there I was on set with this handsome, cheekily grinning hunk of man, cracking jokes.

He bummed a cigarette from me, then lit us both. His hand shook slightly, he gave me what was to become his trade-mark, that cheeky grin and said,

“Gee, wish I hadn’t taken that last drink of gin – what a night!”

I laughed, well knowing the feeling. It was a gambling casino scene and every time he passed me he squeezed my arm, leaned over my back and pinched me, getting perilously close to my nether quarters. And I passed up the chance at Clark Gable.



Clark Gable

Mind you, I'm glad I did, for I was one of a small minority and had to run into him frequently for several years afterward. The picture was a horsey horror, *Sporting Blood* and the unmoustachioed, unknown leading man was, of course, Clark Gable, big ears and all.

Warner Brothers had had him under contract, but after one small part as a chauffeur "heavy" they let him go. 'Twas said in the cine grills that Jack Warner, in due time of course, was going to hang, shoot or throw himself from the Pacific Pallsades. Madge Evans, who had been a child star, retired for the "awkward stages" was to emerge in this film as an adult star. Charles Brabin, a charming man, but not among the top directors, was Theda Bara's husband. Well, we know what happened to Clark, but I don't think Madge Evans did much after that film, sweet though she was.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

Understandably Sol and I didn't socialise much. Naturally he was extremely busy, approaching the middle years and also had a curious hobby, apart from me, I mean. He loved to cook, so one or two nights each week, he'd come to my cosy cottage, loaded with food packages, plus, always, sheaves of beautiful flowers. I knew him both before and after the prohibition repeal and in both periods he inevitably brought the nicest drop of the "doings". Oh yes, it was the full bit, but I'm glad of those five

years. They've had to last me a long, long time. Rainbow trout, which had to be flown in from colder parts, were one of his specialties; he knew how to cook them deliciously. Very thick lamb chops, laced with garlic were another gastronomic delight. Soft lights, burning incense and need I mention music? All the arts in love making were there for us. Ah, to quote an even still beloved poet, Lawrence Hope, in *The Teak Forest*,

*"Whether I loved you who shall say?
Whether I drifted down your way
In the endless River of Chance and Change
And you woke the strange
Unknown longings that have no names,
But burn us all in their hidden flames,
Who shall say?"*

This was one of the happiest times in my life. I don't claim it was all perfect; there were mistakes and the trusting of wrong people, believing in false friends, but I learned the hard way and the mistakes were my own doing. I was to blame. Also, I was still drinking too much, with even less reason now. I don't know whether it was the fear that my security wouldn't last or still the seeking of the unattainable - I think so, for I'm still alone. I smile wryly.

One happily re-met friend turned up from time to time in these happy years - the English journalist, Cedric Belfrage, whom I'd met when he interviewed Clara and again for a few moments at Bea Lillie's Beverly Hills Hotel suite. He was an Oxford graduate and splendid writer, having published two "best sellers" on very early days in Hollywood - *Away From It All* and *Promised Land*. He said he was now domiciled in the USA, and married an actress, but they were now apart. I'd never met her, fortunately I gathered. Ceddie said she had developed a penchant for cavorting in the nude - decidedly "not done" in "naice" circles then. Upon reflection I consider the lady to have been very "avante garde", but how were we to know?

Ceddie was having a lean time trying to break into motion picture writing and looked a little “seedy”. His American writer friend, Lester Cole, was in pretty much the same material position. I was very fond of Ceddie and invited them to my cottage to eat any time they wanted. I laugh when I think of Ceddie, in his Oxford bags, tied at the waist with a piece of rope. It is wonderful to share when you have and also to share when you have not. We did and laughed a great deal. The depression was well and truly with us and I was one of the lucky ones. A few years later dear Ceddie, in friendship, more than repaid my humble hospitality. Lester’s name, I see now and then on television. I hope he is prospering.

Still unsuccessful, Ceddie met and married a woman journalist who worked for the London *Times*. Things picked up and Cedric began writing regularly again and settled for a time in Hollywood. The Belfrages produced a baby daughter, who made herself noticed with emphasis right from the beginning. Sally screamed all night every night without apparent reason, or cessation. Having some knowledge of other people’s babies, I’d be awakened at all hours of the night with an ineffectual whine,

“Tui, what do we do to stop her screaming? We’ve tried everything and nothing works. You seem to know the secret without having produced any.”

In the end I snapped, “Drown it and let me sleep dammit!”

But please don’t think me completely heartless. Previous advice had proved fruitless, so what the hell?

The Belfrages would stay in Hollywood for a few months, perhaps a year and then disappear for ages, I imagined to New York or London.

The last time I saw Cedric, about three years later, tragedy had struck. I was alcoholic and helpless. The dear souls put me in a “rest home” for such cases and paid for it. The alleged cure then, in such places, was hopelessly inadequate, expensive and mostly useless, as you’ll see.

A few weeks afterwards I was home, but the Belfrages had moved on and we were not to meet again. I received one card from New York, our last communication. I didn't even hear anything of them second-hand until the McCarthy "Witchhunt" in the States hit the newspapers. A paragraph caught my eye. It seemed the Un-American Senate Committee Investigators were looking into a weekly magazine called *The National Guardian*, which was run by Cedric Belfrage. During interrogations he would not ever admit belonging at any time to a communist party, but he was still expelled from the USA, where he had been living in New York. In the years I knew Ceddie, it was only as a gentle caring soul and we had never mentioned the word communist. Nor can I remember ever discussing Bolsheviks, which is what we called them then. But Ceddie went back to London, innocent or not, after his expulsion.⁴⁶

My autographed copies of his two best sellers disappeared with other valuables I'd left with a silly bitch acquaintance while I was on one of my Pacific crossings. I regained none of my things, but the books were my biggest loss.

Again later, I read of Ceddie's daughter, Sally, having written a book of a trip she'd made across the top of Russia, Siberia, from west to Eastern Vladivostok. I read it, an interesting teenage account of a cold, but fascinating place. I guess Sally has stopped screaming.⁴⁷

Out at MGM one day, very early in the thirties, while lunching and laughing with some friends between takes I noticed my friends staring at someone I could hear or feel passing behind my chair. I couldn't see her, but boy, the planks in the floor shook with the mighty footsteps. She passed from behind me and into view - a beautiful, fascinating lady, whom I'd seen not long before, at a ballyhoo premiere for a film she'd done with Coop, *Morocco*. The premiere was at Grauman's Chinese Theatre. Of course, it was Marlene Dietrich, an exotic, sultry-looking woman, albeit very German and somewhat arrogant in her manner, but oh boy, at that time she sure had a heavy foot.

I've always made an effort to catch her act, for she is an interesting personality, but in my humble opinion, the dear never did learn to act. However, she raised and lowered her eye lids in a most enchanting manner, both off and on the screen. I'm sorry I missed her here in Australia.

Also at MGM at this time I did some work with Jean Harlow. I've mentioned she did "extra" work on one of Clara's pictures, but I didn't meet her then, likewise Gable. I found Jean to be one of the nicest gals in a town full of bitches. She was completely natural, most unusual, unfortunately, in so many of the stars of my times, and concerned for all those working with her. An example of this concern was in a scene I did with her. It was a street scene inside a sound stage. I had to run from a building onto the sidewalk and approach a truck parked there. Jean was in the back of the truck. I can't remember what the scene was about, but the driver backed suddenly and the truck all but pinned me to the wall. My training made me quick and I jumped clear, but Jean was out of the truck in a flash, worrying- like hell that I'd been hurt. I knew many who wouldn't have bothered. I saw quite a deal of her during that film and liked and admired her enormously.



Marlene Dietrich



Jean Harlow

Two shockingly bad movies have been made, purporting to depict her- life, but I'd certainly have seen, heard and known the libellous lies in them, if they were true. Plenty came to my ears then. Sol was of the "inner sanctum" and knew damn near as much as L.B. Mayer himself. A couple of years before my meeting with Jean, Sol had called at my cottage one Sunday morning, white-faced and worried. He almost had to pass my place going to Culver City, well almost, and the top brass had called him to come to the studio immediately. All hell had broken loose in a big way. Jean Harlow had married a writer-producer and they were in a flap. I've already mentioned the man concerned, Paul Bern, who spent a short and futile time chasing Clara. She referred to him as "creepy" and said he obviously got a kick out of pursuing the current "sex-pot" of moviedom. I know he got nowhere with Clara - she liked them handsome and strong - and why not? Bern had nothing going for him, except, perhaps, Joan Crawford, and his personality was non-existent, but he must have spun a good line to poor Jean for her to have married him. The world knows the grim result of the marriage, but it doesn't know the negative reaction to the match from the studio, nor the over-lengthy time (about eight hours) it took the local "fuzz" to get to Bern's bloodless, nude body and the enigmatic note, ostensibly left for Jean; because the studio fathers didn't seem to know what to do about it. This isn't an isolated case - as stated before, Hollywood produced many "whodunnits" which were supposed to be strictly for "home" consumption and most are still unsolved. It makes me laugh that they thought they could keep everything quiet.

Of course it was said that Jean was the cause of it all; "Poor Mr. Bern was a pathetic deluded male, lured on by the sexy screen star who needed any 'publicity' which marriage to him gave her, like we need a hole in the head." Bern belonged to - the minority who did badly, financially, in the picture making business and boy, how that few stuck together. Good on them for loyalty, but not for maligning a kind and good person to save

face for the type who would chase people in the public eye only to feed egocentric fantasies and, as in this case, sometimes burn their fingers in the process.

Of course, things haven't changed; fornication, homosexuality, too much booze and too many bed partners haven't gone out of style, only today there are more of us and we do have one bad problem left over from prohibition days - a problem that escalates other troubles, especially in the young - drugs. Those greedy tentacles reach even further and lower for their filthy lucre and behind eminently respectable "fronts".

No doubt about it, though, I do think MGM in those days had the most excitement, charisma and most of the exciting people in the movie business, but also, of course, I'm biased through having so many dear friends there. I remember seeing a couple of young, good looking, kind of shy boys darting about here and there; you and I got to know them quite well as Henry Fonda and James Stewart. Also around was Robert Young, the perennial juvenile, still going strong and, like Topsy, he just seemed to grow there.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

During the early thirties, Southern California experienced a dreadful earthquake which claimed many hundreds of lives. I'd just left the studio to go round the corner to visit a friend who lived in her one storey wooden home a block away. We were standing in her living room when the all too familiar (to me, being New Zealand born) rumbling sound and movement started. The three of us, fools as we were, rushed out onto the front lawn. My Auburn car was parked in the driveway, brakes on and in gear, but it was rushing back and forth all on its own. The gears were stripped and other major damage done.



1932 Auburn Speedster

We couldn't keep our feet and flopped on the lawn. I watched, fascinated as the high water tower on the studio lot, swayed and teetered perilously back and forth, but it was well built and withstood the pressure as did most of the studio buildings. Very little damage was discovered except for a wide crack in the front administration building near the main gates. I believe there was some panic in the dubbing rooms and I don't blame them. I'd have dropped with fright had I been in one of those tiny concrete rabbit burrows that day. Long Beach was hit badly as well as some smaller towns a little further inland. It was quite the most terrible quake I experienced while in California, although it wasn't the only one by any means.

It sparked off immediate thoughts of Glory, as a quake is always wont to make a New Zealander think of home. Although I was working enough to support myself comfortably, the work was becoming less and less important and I became irritable and less interested through this frustration, I also used this situation as an excuse to drink more - many of us did. Sol chided me, but mildly and I guess I'm still very pigheaded and I learned about booze the hard way, although I consider myself fortunate that it no longer bothers me at all, if I drink or don't,

One evening Sol told me there was a “bit” part in *The White Sister*, which was starring the incomparable Helen Hayes, and asked me would I do it. To watch her work I’d have scrubbed the studio floors. Besides, wasn’t I a tiny bit of the MGM family? An old friend, Vicky Fleming was directing, Clark and some others I knew were in the cast, so why not? Ten years earlier and just one year before my arrival in Hollywood, I remembered my beloved Lillian Gish and Ronald Colman had made this story, and a better film, for the same company.



Helen Hayes

Wardrobe supplied quite a number of us with nun’s habits; we were to sit on long benches at a clothless, sparsely laid, wooden table, while Helen passed at the back of us, spooning out porridge into a bowl in front of each. The director had called the cast and crew together and told us that a priest was on the set to see that accuracy was maintained according to the particular order of nuns and the Catholic faith. We were told not to smoke while wearing the habits, no swear words (which is always hard on me) and no playing of cards. I quite approve of this upholding of dignity; too bad it’s out of fashion at the moment in regard to many of the gentler things. But a funny thing occurred while this scene was being filmed. Most people will realise that Helen Hayes is of tiny build, slight and short. It was a dolly shot, the camera moving with the actress, a close shot, being taken across the table, which caused difficulties. If Helen walked on the ground, our heads cut into her close-up. Carpenters quickly laid some boards the length of the shot to bring Helen up to a height where her face wouldn’t be obscured. All went well at first; we slurped our porridge, or pretended to,

and Helen glided along the rough boards – the epitome of heavenly beauty in her white habit – but then it happened. A board moved, making her trip, almost fall and drop her large wooden bowl.

“Oh, damn!” Came from the angelic face.

Dead silence for a couple of seconds, while the lovely face turned scarlet. Suddenly the whole set was roaring with laughter, including the dear Miss Hayes, the priest and everyone else there.

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

A few days later Sol and I were having one of our lovely intimate home suppers in between some work he had brought along to do. His dear face, with its handsome and open grey eyes beamed at me,

“Tui, I’ve an idea. Your birthday and Christmas are close together and I want you to have something you really want to gladden your heart. I know you’re feeling restless; you’re getting sub-standard work and naturally you feel frustrated. I don’t want to nag, but I’m worried about your drinking, especially driving the kind of cars you prefer.”

I felt the anger rising – already relaxing with my second, or was it the third, strong bourbon, a drink Sol seemed also to enjoy, but now I wonder if he really did. I was on the verge of retorting tartly, but decided against and just stared into his kind eyes. He kept smiling and continued,

“I know you are homesick and missing your mother. You need a holiday away from it all – movies, friends, Hollywood, the whole scene – even me.”

That last bit opened the floodgates. I rushed to his side and into his arms – he was so gentle, but also passionate and loving. I think dinner was a little late and slightly burned that evening, but who ever counts the cost of strong young passion, then or now?

Later he said,

“I didn’t finish what I was going to say to you earlier.”

“Oh,” I retorted flippantly, “My present, what is it? Leo the Lion? L.B.’s office as a town house?”

“No,” he smiled. “I’ve had a nice stroke of luck, businesswise, and as a combined gift I want you to make a choice – perhaps it’s more of a decision.”

I was speechless and breathless with curiosity, but waited patiently. He continued,

“Your Auburn (car) is eighteen months old – you may have a sea voyage around the world, visit your mother in New Zealand and then on to Europe. I can meet you in Chicago on your return and we may be able to marry then – I’m not sure yet. Anyway we can see the World’s Fair before coming home. Or I’ll buy you a brand new Auburn Cord automobile.”

I stared – mouth unbecomingly open.

“Well, what do you say?”

Instinctively I knew he wanted me to accept the car. I hesitated, confused and too overwhelmed to say anything. I kissed him, saying it was all too much, but he seemed impatient, saying he wanted me to have either, but it had to be my decision. Finally I asked for a few days to think about it; thrilling as it all seemed, I felt an uneasiness, something niggling in my subconscious. Like most young fools, I was mad about beautiful cars, so was sorely tempted to say right then,

“Oh, the car, please.”

If only I had, but then would it have mattered? Not to my Sol and if I had, I don’t think I’d have been here writing my life’s memories.

Some days later, after having received more mail from Glory, who, as usual, said how she missed me and would we ever meet again? – I made my decision; the trip. Sol sighed, accepted gracefully, but said how lonely he’d be and how he’d be lost without me. I felt the same; I was not as excited or happy as I should have been – that “niggle” persisted.

I set about the organisation of the trip - no small task - as I had pets, scads of them, mostly dogs, but also cats, a monkey, chipmunks, birds, they all played a part in my blissful life at the cottage. I boarded them out carefully. I abhor cruelty or neglect of pets.

I also had to apply for my first American passport and visas for France, the United Kingdom and Germany. The year was 1933 and Hitler had just come to power - I still have that passport, but I never saw Hitler's Germany, although, God knows, one way or another I know it backwards. I said "so-long" at a few parties for intimate friends. Woody had introduced my piano-playing friend to a wealthy writer of popular western paperbacks. (What a pity I'd divorced Bob - I could have got him the books wholesale. Oh well....) The lady married the writer and they had a prolonged honeymoon in Europe. I said a tearful farewell to my old buddy, Pat Daly, and her kiddies, who lived across from my "Crazy Man" cottage. Pat said she'd keep an eye on the place and on Sol. I packed, battened down my precious little home and suddenly I was in Sol's car, being transported to Wilmington Port in Los Angeles and the Matson passenger Liners, doing the Pacific runs. Bound for Honolulu, Pago Pago (American Samoa), Suva, Fiji, then Auckland, New Zealand. The ship was to continue to Sydney Australia before about-facing to return the same route. Driving me to the ship, Sol was upset and, I now know, far from well. He stopped at a drug store as he said,

"Dammed indigestion again - chest pains. Won't be a sec. I just want some bi-carb of soda," I thought he left the car slowly.

I grew more miserable the nearer we were to the ship and quite honestly begged him to get my luggage off. I desperately didn't want to leave him, but he insisted now. My stateroom was large and overlooking the ocean. It was charming, with flowers everywhere and a huge basket, containing several bottles of Chateau Yquem, piles of gorgeous fruits, nuts and candles, stood on a table.

I was glad we hadn't invited any friends – we had our last hour or so alone as we wanted it, but, although he was tender and loving, we were both sad and couldn't shake “the feeling”.

At last the gong sounded for “all ashore”. We went on deck together and again he kissed me goodbye. I didn't see him walk down the gang plank – my eyes were blinded by tears. The ship's horn hooted and we were moving inexorably from the wharf. In no time the wharf was empty except for one lone figure, which walked the length of the quay as we moved astern. I waved a limp wet handkerchief. I see it plainly now, forty five years later – I'll see it until I die. He has never been replaced in my heart and I gave up looking long ago.

After sitting half the night weeping silently on the deck, I went to my elegant stateroom and, finally, slept until late. A steward brought me a small breakfast, it was a glorious day and being young and resilient, I pulled myself together, bathed, dressed and sallied forth looking for adventure.

The passenger list was not encouraging, but I found one or two pleasant people, men and women, we played deck sport and had the odd cocktail or two about six, followed by very dull evenings. Happy sounds floated towards us from aft – cabin class sounded so much fun, I'd rather have been there.

First port of call was Honolulu, it was my first visit there – but by no means my last. I was to return eleven times and leave each time completely enchanted. Those who never saw Honolulu in its natural state, couldn't possibly imagine the mystic magic of the place then. I declined several invitations to join shore parties and tours, hired a taxi for the day, making sure the driver was Hawaiian, or at least mostly so, and off we went. First, over the Pali, winding around the hills to the fascinating Upside Down Waterfall – so called because the wind causes updraught so fierce it forces the water upward. We drove everywhere – to the famous Dole Pineapple fields, the vast sugar plantations, Pearl Harbour, lunched at the side of the road and then took off for the other side of the Island to see and almost be frightened by

the sounds of a magnificent “blow hole” then on to the unspoiled Coco Head. The changing colours of the waters inshore were unbelievable – I was already drunk with the beauty of it all, so the rest of the day was slightly anticlimactic. I used my sixteen millimetre camera to take movies of everything. Of course, then Diamond Head was unspoiled, even now the landmark is unforgettable and excites the homecomer as much as the tourist. Then it had no roads scarring its beauty or death dealing weapons entombed in its entrails. Still I always thrill at its sight.

As is my wont at such times, I worked to start the fat, jolly driver yapping and he gave me plenty of interesting information about native habits, his family and Honolulu in general. He really warmed to me when I spoke to him in Maori and explained how well I knew and loved them. The upshot of this instant rapport was the secret and thrilling news that one of his trillion cousins owned and operated a “still”, making the Hawaiian equivalent of good old Kentucky Mountain Dew Whisky, called (as near as I can spell it) Okulehau.⁴⁸ I’d once tasted just a drop of this delectable nectar. It was the night it snowed in Hollywood. I’d been in bed sober for hours and it snowed as I drove to the party, so Okulehau can’t be blamed for that snow job. I put it to my fat friend that I’d dearly love a drop again, just for Auld Lang Syne and remembrances of prohibition and would his distant cousin oblige? Would he? Before I’d finished asking we were at his gate. My buddy said he’d better do the business; he did and I got it – the “business”. Couz wouldn’t sell anything less than a half gallon jug and the price staggered me some, but nowhere near as much as did the Oke before the day was out. I had a few nips sitting in the back of the taxi, just to keep my spirits up. (My shipmates, first class, had dampened them somewhat, spirits I mean.)

As I was carried aboard that night, deliriously singing obscene sea chanteys (heard at night from sailors who thought they were unheard, that’s my story and I’m sticking to it) my dull shipmates’ own spirits were considerably enlivened, alas, for the

only time during the entire journey. It's a damn shame about all that film I took during the day, lying in the grass sipping Oke, taking wonderful shots of Honolulu, Waikiki Beach and other grand sights way below. There were also fantastic sky shots, clouds scurrying by, or so I thought, distant mountains, the cane fields - ah, the beauty of it all - I think. Developed, all there was to be seen was ghosting. Are you surprised? Three days later I wasn't - it took that long for my eyes to focus properly! Don't talk to me about Okulehau! The other passengers didn't, or about anything else, for days. However as most of them were Tasmanians, New Zealanders and some from one or two islands and they had so little to amuse them, they soon came to heel, if only to hear all the lying lurid Hollywood tales I told to crack even for their priggishness.

All was forgiven with the dissipation of my hangover and I even had a few of the more overwrought types slyly ask if I'd managed to smuggle any of the contents of the jug aboard. This I indignantly denied - as I think on it, that taxi driver had a good day's work, but at least he did pour me aboard. Pimms No.1 seemed to be about as wicked (I'd never heard of the bloody stuff until then) as any of the "leddies" got; you can imagine their reaction to one red-blooded lady. Of course, the trip would have been a great deal gayer in many respects, had there been more folk from U.S.A. as well as Australia, and certainly younger also. Ships were nearly always "light on" going "down under", but did brisk business coming back. They had the mail franchise which made it worth while. But I remember asking people repeatedly for years after my arrival in the U.S.A. whether they knew of New Zealand - they shook their heads, looking blank. Some even asked didn't I mean Paris France, or London England, which two places seemed to be their limit on the subject of countries outside North America. Had it not been for my little Cockney cabin steward who said his name was Billy Woodbine, the disapproval would have been rougher on me. He and one male passenger, a New Zealand born plantation owner who

sensibly lived in Manila, gave me a few laughs, entertained and watched out for me – but then, I was young and pretty.

Five days later the tongue clicking and dark looks had died down, I was my cheery high-spirited self again and we were sailing into one of the dearest little harbours I've ever seen. I was greatly looking forward to exploring Pago Pago, mostly because it was the location for Somerset Maugham's short story, *Rain*, which had been adapted for film by my dear friend John Colton. I'd been told that Maugham hadn't been to Pago Pago at the time he wrote the story, but probably went later. However I found his story was descriptively fairly accurate; unfortunately, in my ten visits there, I never did meet anybody remotely like the wonderful Sadie Thompson.

On all South Sea Islands, of course, one is always running into Reverends of all descriptions – the difficulty is dodging them – but as we know, poor Sadie's Reverend turned out to be a devil worshipper himself. Fortunately Sadie found him out before losing a good night's sleep and became her gay, reckless, devil-may-care self again, cheering up natives and sailors alike. Personally I'm all for it.

Although missing out on such lively and intense "goings on", I had a lovely time and the sights were well worth seeing. We drove anywhere cars could go on the island – to a little village called Nuuuli and the mysterious mountain called Rainmaker – it was truly a remote native island in 1933, with most of the children sensibly naked, men nearly so in short loin cloths, and most of the women bare-breasted, also in loin cloths. I took lots of photographs for which I was grateful, for a few years later I called there several times and found things had changed drastically – new buildings were everywhere, the women were covered in mother-hubbards, a curio market had been set up onshore and a tin shed had been erected to sell beer.

On a later visit, while we were inside the shed a male passenger rushed in and that, in itself, was a feat, as he had only one leg inside his trousers and almost everything else flapped in

the breeze. It seemed a native Chief (like the Red Indians, in Polynesia they are all Chiefs) had caught him redhanded with his daughter the Princess (what else?) in the tall grass up the hill. Naturally the Chief took a dim view of this and manfully grasping his spear, gave chase. The passenger protested he was not at fault - the girl was - and in an aggrieved tone he begged asylum. We all just stared interestedly and continued slurping our beer, however I guess the Chief must have run out of ire: he didn't show. Naturally we were disappointed but he must have been a brave man and decided to take his losses like one. This incident took place a few years after my first visit, so I suppose the natives had become almost "civilised" after so much contact with us whites.

But that first visit was charming - the natives unadorned and beautiful, the foliage incredible in its green and flamboyant colours. Since World War Two there has been a wharf there, but then we were brought ashore by tender and passengers swam in the deep and lovely harbour. I'll never forget its beauty or the swarms of pretty native fishing boats dancing against the sunset as we left.

Aboard, we natives of the *Mariposa* had become slightly more friendly. Journey's end was in sight and, let's face it, seeing a little of life in the raw does tend to broaden the outlook of even maiden ladies, of whom we'd a fair sprinkling. One or two even went so far as to nod and show a couple of teeth whilst primly promenading - almost guiltily, I even joined three or four on a tour of Suva, Fiji - just shows you huh?

CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

Every night during the trip Sol had sent a loving cable, which the Purser handed me each morning with a broad and knowing smile. I smiled right back, for the message brightened my day even if nothing else did. On my way ashore at Suva, I paused at the Purser's desk, he wasn't there, but his assistant said there was

no message yet – it would probably be there when I returned. Sometimes there was a slight delay. Although disappointed, I joined the party who had already hired a car and we set forth.

Even then the Indians outnumbered Fijians and we were surprised at the size of the township – Renwick Road, Street of all nations – we left the car and wandered around the shops, buying a few things. One tailor offered to make us Fiji silk suits while we waited, at a token price. We didn't take up the offer but many passengers did.

For some inexplicable reason I fell in love with Suva – I still can't explain why. It stank to high heaven; an odour like rotting garlic, but I loved the people I met. The Indian women were a fascinating sight, all dressed in white with head veils pulled down hiding their eyes. The material was very thin, of course or they wouldn't have been able to see. The mysterious image was enhanced by the gold rings they had pierced through their noses. The taxi took us to the rice paddy, where the Indians were planting the seedlings in water; most of them were women workers, their long clothes hanging limp and wet around their feet, inches deep in water. Swiftly they passed from row to row, pressing the little plants under the water.

The driver then offered to drive us quite a distance to a remote native village where the people lived much as they had for centuries. He told us head hunting still was practised occasionally in secret, but the authorities were slowly stamping it out. Fijians are Melanesians and were of a more savage disposition than Polynesians. We drove up a winding hill, past a leper colony set away among the slopes and arrived at what really proved to be a primitive place. Some children were naked and most men wore tattered lava-lavas; the women, unlike those we'd seen in Pago Pago, wore old and ragged mother-hubbards. All the huts, including a real chief's house, were made of grass and whatever foliage was native in the vicinity. We didn't go inside, but they looked dark, dank and unhealthy.

The few people gathered near couldn't or wouldn't speak English and seemed rather unfriendly. I was dressed all in white, am of pale complexion and was very blonde at that time, so perhaps looked the most delectable of our motley crew - especially to a cannibal looking for a feed. One frightening looking woman, with a wall eye and other unwholesome deformities, detached herself from her mates and strolled over to me, propped herself there and, glaring malevolently, stretched out her hand and felt the flesh on my arm, much as one would a piece of meat, to see if it was tender. (She was of indeterminate age, but had a baby on one hip.) The wretched creature must have been well satisfied, for her gargoyle face broke into a smile, making it more repulsive than before.

I become unusually unvocal when terrified, but very mobile. I flew to the car, slamming the door behind me. The others followed almost as quickly. Although they laughed and ribbed me unmercifully all day, they admitted they had been uneasy - we'd have made a nice big pot of stew for a gang of hungry headhunters. I re-visited Suva ten times through the ensuing years, but I never again went to Tamavua, the wild native village. We thanked the driver for his zeal in showing us the "real McCoy", but said we'd like our lunch at the civilized Grand Pacific Hotel. The food was delicious and the view, overlooking lawns and gardens down to the sea, superb. Turbaned barefooted Hindus waited on us gracefully and in whispering silence on the verandah, where we had a drink before eating.

Years later, in 1938, to be exact, I walked across those lawns to the tennis courts and watched a game played especially for us by the then Davis Cup team which was aboard the *Monterey* with us. The team consisted of Donald Budge, Gene Mako, Dorothy Workman and Bundy, whose first name I can't remember.

But back in 1933 I had a delightfully carefree day - the weather was heavenly, with blue and cloudless sky. At last, blissfully tired, we returned to the ship, where I raced for the elevator up to my stateroom.

I'd just finished showering and dressing for dinner when a light tap sounded on the door. The Purser entered, holding a radiogram in his hand. I stepped forward to take it, but he held it still and asked if he might speak to me. It was then I noticed he wasn't alone: behind him stood the nurse from the ship hospital clinic. Completely puzzled I beckoned them both in and closed the door behind them. Sudden unreasoning fear gripped me – something was very wrong. A thought flashed through my mind, “Glory, something’s happened to my mother,” we were only three days from Auckland where she was to meet the ship. I became aware of a voice which sounded sympathetic, but detached,

“Terrible shock for you. The company extends deep condolences. We thought it best to wait until we sailed tonight before breaking such shattering news. The cable came last night – after all the loving ones, it seems impossible –” the voice broke off.

Horror now flooded through me and certainly showed in my face. I reeled sideways and the nurse took my arm. I didn't faint – I never faint. They led me to an armchair and I sat. It wasn't Glory: it was Sol! After handing me the dreaded cable, the Purser left, insisting, the nurse stay. Numbly I opened the message.

“So sorry, Sol died last night. Heart attack. Jan.”⁴⁹

A friend had sent the message and there was no way I could undo it. I sat silently for a long time, staring at nothing, unable to grasp it. – must be a nightmare. God knows I had them often enough. I wake and say, “Thank God. only a nightmare.” But time dragged on; the nurse sat patiently, quietly. Finally I forced myself to move and speak.

“Please nurse, do go to dinner. I'm quite alright – please.”

At first she declined almost roughly, but I wanted to be alone and insisted until she was forced to give way. She left two sleeping tablets in case I needed them. I was dazed and unable to properly take anything in. I just sat and stared. One shaded lamp

lit the cabin. I didn't move from the chair. Sometime later a discreet knock and Billy Woodbine entered. He didn't say a word, just gently placed a tray, containing some excellently arranged light but nourishing food, on the table and left.

I lost track of time, but sometime during the night I left the chair and lay on the bed just as I was. I didn't cry, didn't eat, just lay there feeling empty. drained of feeling. I didn't take the tablets, but dozed a little toward daylight.

The nurse appeared at about 7.30 a.m., sat near me and asked if there was anything - perhaps help me undress - I let her, took a quick shower and got into bed. I drank a little soup during the day and that night gave in and took a sleeper. I knew the crew were worried about me and appreciated their kindness. Billy Woodbine kept everyone away from me - one or two people wanted to see me, but I refused - I just couldn't. The tablet gave me a good night's sleep and I felt stronger and clearer of head in the morning.

Billy smuggled me up to the boat deck where he had made a small, secluded spot for me and fixed a deck chair. The sea air felt good on my face. The day after tomorrow I'd have to tell Glory my tragic news but I had other things on my mind now. I couldn't continue on the world trip; it seemed senseless. I'd cancel my tickets in New Zealand, visit with my mother until the *Mariposa* returned to Auckland from Sydney and go back home.

Glory was on the wharf, waiting as expected. I could plainly see her in red leather coat, firmly grasping a posy of flowers. Big smile of welcome. The passengers disembarked and I sent Billy to bring her aboard. Billy closed the door as he left. My stricken face warned Glory and she dropped the flowers as I blurted out, "Oh, mum. Sol is dead. I heard two days ago."

And then I cried for the first time, sobbing uncontrollably. A long time passed before I calmed enough to leave the ship, but the next two weeks did nothing to lighten my burden and sorrowing heart.

CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

The return trip was rather vague and no wonder. The New Zealand folk thought a few drinks would cure all. I didn't and it doesn't, but I took to the bottle for some sort of surcease like the idiot I was. I sat in the cabin brooding, eating little, but drinking plenty. Billy Woodbine did his best to cheer and advise me, but to no avail. After a time I went to the dining room for an occasional meal, then took a few turns around the deck. Several kind people tried to get acquainted, but I was unapproachable in my grief.

I took to playing and singing sad love songs in my stateroom - the bottle was always close by. A couple of very wealthy women from Hawaii heard me and insisted I be moved to a Lani next to theirs. Lanis were special staterooms "up top" with their own private decks, similar to present-day home units. My gear was moved; I was too befuddled to argue - and the party was on. I played and sang for them and they drank more than I, but they also handled it better. I felt constantly ill, of course and of course the remedy was the proverbial "hair of the dog that bit you" - a vicious circle. We didn't go out or mix with the other passengers. I guess they were nice women; I don't really know. I remember one name, a very well-known one, but don't have any memory of what they looked like.

At Honolulu they left the ship. I was relieved to return to my former stateroom. Billy gave me a good lecture, but I needed more - a damn good shaking. I loathe self-pity and I was wallowing in it. It was still five long days to San Pedro and home. Deciding I had to pull myself together, I stopped drinking, ate a little and took a pill or two for a good rest. Two nights before we landed I had to get up for the toilet. A little dizzy, unused to sleepers, I zigged when the ship zagged and struck my temple on the iron corner of my cabin trunk. It was a hard blow, but no cause for alarm. After dabbing a little cold water on it I returned to bed and sleep. Next morning I had the most misleading black

eye you ever saw. Who was going to believe a story like that after the way I'd behaved?

Billy, who knew I was sober, just shook his head and said, "Poor kid. You can't win, can you," and disappeared.

He returned with a lump of steak which he slapped on my eye, making me jump and match his cockney language. He needn't have bothered, it was even blacker when we berthed. Several friends were there to meet me and their eyebrows arched at the sight. I just glared and said nothing. I didn't go to the cottage; I never set foot in it again, for which I paid dearly and regret still - boy was I robbed!

Having chosen the wrong friends with whom to stay and pay, some months later I was in a nice mess. If I'd gone to the one I should have my circumstances could have been very different. Like my mother before me, I had no head for business matters. I should have been paid something for my cottage. I let my "friends" attend to the business and received nothing, but there was always a supply of liquor. They took my fridge and furniture, saying it would do for board. I sold my piano to another friend - cheaply.

Weeks went by and I drew more and more into myself. I wasn't getting on with the people with whom I was staying - they had all there was to get and it was plenty. Often I drove my car to the beach and sat fishing from the pier, thinking, fretting, speaking to nobody. It took very little booze to knock me over now, so if I had a dollar or two I'd have a few and go to my room to dream - nightmares. Finally I had a blazing row with my "landlords", packed what they hadn't stolen and left, saying I'd send for my things. I still had a fair amount of luggage.

Sensibly I moved back to my old stamping ground, the Warner-Kelton Hotel. The "friends" had pawned my jewellery and kindly given me the ticket. It wasn't until years later, after paying interest all that time, that I redeemed them to find they had stolon the best piece. The one thing they hadn't managed to

grasp was my life insurance policies and they, with a few jobs I half-heartedly began doing, kept me going for awhile.

Everything was vastly changed, talkies were firmly established now and improving all the time. Colour was also to make a great difference soon, especially with musicals, which were rapidly becoming all the rage. New stars had sprung up from nowhere, many with no showbusiness background or training. I couldn't understand it all. The Boulevard no longer had that old familiar family air. I could drive up and down time after time and not see a friendly face or hear a "Hello Tui." I began to dislike it more and more. The daily Trades (papers giving news of studios' work) were not encouraging either. I still retain two such papers - one large one dated October 1926 and one small, dated September 1937. There was at least three times more production in 1926 than in 1937.

By the time I returned many of my friends had drifted away, including Charlie and Bebe Parrott - Charlie was the comic Charlie Chase - Stan Laurel was teamed up with Babe Hardy and we seldom saw each other now. I was lonely but it was mostly my own fault. And as I said, times were changing fast. New York stage had lost any of its main attractions to Hollywood. In my opinion several of them should have stayed in New York and many did return. To Hollywood's everlasting shame many splendid actors and actresses were reduced to taking extra work and were grateful even for that. They were never even given the chance to see if they had a voice or the chance to train and the Bette Davises were few. She had had some stage experience, but her first parts were not good and having seen them I didn't dream of the "great" she was to become and remain.

Dispirited and depressed I began dodging picture folk I'd known and took to dropping into O'Brien's Beer Parlour on Vine Street. Often old-timers sat about moodily nursing hangovers and too often I became one of them. Every time I was there, so was Lloyd Hamilton, also known as Ham Hamilton, formerly a good comic who lived in a cheap hotel across the

street. He could no longer face the camera, so his acting days were taken over by grog – he was one of many who went this way and I shuddered when I was aware enough to wonder whether I was joining them. It certainly looked that way. Ham was not helped by us buying him wine, which he preferred, he couldn't eat, was a permanently ghastly colour and, dear gentle soul that he was, just quietly went to sleep one night never to waken.

I met many unsavoury people during this period and indiscriminately attended their parties. Luckily I hung on to my car and always had a roof of good repute over my head, thanks to my mania for sleeping in my own bed. As for drunken driving I needn't mention that I should have been in jail countless times for the condition in which I drove. It isn't to my credit that I never hit anybody. One of those rather sordid sprees turned into a "nightmare alley" or perhaps, a Mack Sennett Comedy, depending on one's point of view.

This episode didn't include the "down and outers" or "bums", but a gathering of eight or nine women of "good repute", although seemingly that was more good luck than judgment. I made my way into a cocktail lounge one morning in bad need of a "hair" and as I tottered to a box-stool someone called,

"Hi, Tui. Come and join us."

Surprised I turned around rather carefully and saw a group at a table. They were all young women with the exception of the woman who had called me. She was the wife of a well-known comedian, but living apart from him. I'd met her at a few parties but knew little about her. She'd have been in her midthirties, but looked younger – the rest of us were in our midtwenties. After a few convivial drinks I was feeling as bright and raring for adventure as the rest of them. One girl, whose father was a well-known and respected Los Angeles attorney lived with her parents and suggested a great weekend for all of us. Her father owned a ranch house, splendidly furnished and surrounded by acres of ground. It was used as a holiday house for riding,

hunting and other such rustic pursuits. Excuse me for not mentioning shooting - we took care of that later. I must mention here that none of the girls, with the exception of the comedian's wife and myself, were connected with pictures, but most were friendly with those on the fringes.

Collecting a large load of booze, we parked the extra cars in a parking lot and headed for a well-known desert resort, piled into just a couple of cars. Fortunately an earlier-gained caution gave me the sense to drive my own car, with only one passenger.

The place was beautiful and many miles from L.A., so we sang, danced and made merry for some time without interruption. The huge fireplace held a welcome fire for warmth against the chill desert night. We'd brought plenty of pre-cooked food, so sat around in various stages of inebriation having a high old time. This is great, I thought, no worries about passing out and men taking advantage, one could really drown one's sorrows, or let one's hair down. Yippee! The next morning, well and truly hung-over, I had second thoughts. Sure, they were good fun kids, although a few seemed "closer" to each other than others and I began to wonder. Our hostess, who also was looking rather despondent, served us all a drink, then another before declaring that it was the last of the grog. I started to rise,

"Okay, pal. That's it. Back home for me," although I really wanted to continue the binge.

She literally begged me to stay, saying there were stores a few miles down the road where food and drink were obtainable. Having accepted the original invitation and being the idiot I'd been, I felt I could hardly refuse - besides nobody else was making any move toward leaving. We all offered to put in money for the supplies, but our hostess wouldn't have any of that and drove off with a companion.

As usual, I had to do the entertaining. My ever-present uke was in the car and I swung into a few ribald ditties, the others joining in heartily. Singing is thirsty work and we were glad when the girl's car screeched to a stop outside. They each carried in a

heavy carton and returned for two more, while I eagerly peered inside one in search of a bottle. I looked up in amazement,

“What the hell are you doing with two cartons of medicinal wine tonic?” I yelled.

The others gathered around, as bewildered as I was.

“Sorry kids” said our muzzy friend, “plenty of food and wine tonic, but no booze. The nearest Bar is ten miles or more. But this is good stuff – I used to drink it during prohibition.” She giggled stupidly.

We just stared and sat down with a thump. Eventually, though, the hangovers won. Some didn’t hesitate, just got stuck straight into the medicinal wine tonic. I’d drunk my quota of bootleg gin during prohibition, right along with the best, but this wine stuff was a new one on me. I watched cautiously for awhile, and when nobody dropped dead and my nerves became really uptight, I gingerly took the first.

Several hours and bottles later the party was swinging, literally, from anything handy... doors, chandelier, ornate mantle piece... Tarzan wasn’t in it. By mid-afternoon our mental and physical state was mind boggling.

Since childhood I have been a very good rifle shot as an old friend, Edie Greenhalgh – a crack shot who did her act professionally – had taught me. Her father, Captain Greenhalgh had taught her when she was just a child. My interest was only in target shooting, never hunting, which I loathe, but guns, as such, hold no terrors for me as they do for so many women here in Australia. Early years in outdoor pictures, especially westerns, further increased my familiarity with weapons and I also owned a pearl handled .25 colt hand gun – purchased after having been the mistaken victim of two kidnapping attempts; the mistake was they thought I was Clara Bow. The gun was licenced and, unfortunately, I had it with me on this occasion. Also hanging from the imposing oak beams were several rifles of varying calibre. My “speciality” was the .22 rifle, as it was smaller and lighter than the others.

As we continued drinking the insane mixture the inevitable bragging started.

“Bet you can’t shoot this, or that, object.”

“Oh no? What do you want to bet?”

This went on for some time until the temptation got the better of us. Some distance from the ranch door was a large rock with a flat top, perfect for the placing of targets. Someone did this and then I was told,

“Shoot ’em off, smart ass.”

I showed them all right; I hit all the targets and finished the clip on anything else that attracted my attention. (“Smart ass, huh! Not half. Who did they think they were talking to? An amateur?”) At this point the mentality must have been on a par with a five year old. We didn’t think of the noise attracting attention; such mundane things weren’t even considered. Unfortunately the shooting didn’t stop there. The living room of the beautiful house was about a hundred feet long, the whole of the end wall being taken up with the fireplace. Our hostess, really flying high now, challenged me to shoot out half a dozen lit candles which she placed on the mantle piece. Challenged and befuddled as I was, I do remember asking how her father would take to his walls being shot up – her answer escapes me. I obliged.

My success was one hundred percent, making me even more drunk with greatly misplaced pride and on it went. Bric-a-brac, objects hung on the walls, even the light bulbs on the chandelier, all went in an indiscriminate hail of bullets. Being hailed as the contemporary Annie Oakley was heady stuff, but, praise the Lord, we ran out of ammunition, which probably saved us from a visit to the local Sheriff’s office: for no sooner had we settled down on our blankets and cushions with a “nip” of the “doings”, than, with a snarl of brakes, the local Sheriff’s car arrived. Stupid as we were, we all froze. I hid my automatic, lolled, hopefully casually, on it, and prayed.

Fortunately the older lady of this extremely silly shin-dig, who should have known better originally, hissed,

“Shut up everybody. I’ll do the talking – don’t speak unless spoken to, get it?”

We got it; we also got a helluva fright. It was a good thing the front door was open or one of us would have had to walk well enough to open it; the two lawmen stood there looking in, mouths agape at the debris.

“What in hell goes on here?” said the senior man. “Neighbours have been calling in from all directions saying gangsters had invaded the county. What you kids bin up to?”

I felt a faint stir of hope at this allusion to “kids”. None of us wore make-up and dressed in casual clothes, we didn’t look our ages; God knows, we hadn’t acted them either, but self preservation is a strong instinct in all of us and we did like the lady said and kept “shut up”. She spoke.

“Oh, sorry officer, we hope you haven’t had too much trouble. We didn’t realise the target practice would upset anyone – just high-spirited fun,” she went on glibly.

But most sheriffs are far from dumb, television notwithstanding; these two stepped in, looked at the shot-up room and the pile of original liquor bottles, then took in the medicinal wine; in a disbelieving voice, one said,

“You all bin drinking that shit?”

We nodded dumbly.

“Goddam – you should all be stone dead. You got permission to be here? We check this place out. It belongs to attorney Alred. Well?”

Our hostess finally squeaked,

“Oh, sure, Officer. I’m his daughter. It’s okay – our being here. I mean.”

“That a fact?” said our inquisitor, “you got a drivers’ licence or identification?”

With a sigh of relief she produced her licence.

“Humph, your daddy’s sure going to tear the hide off you.”

He nodded to his partner and they stepped outside to confer. They didn't lower their voices much and I, for one, listened hard and heard,

“What d'you think Sam?”

“Oh, I dunno. Bunch of stoopid 'varsity stoodents. Too much money, too much liquor, no sense and the parents want a thumping as bad as they do. Need the shit kicked out of them, guess they'll get it too. Ha, ha!”

Hans agreed; they re-entered, gave us a short, but very sharp lecture, said any more shooting and we'd be hauled in and locked up, and left, not overly amused at such a waste of time.

We couldn't do any more shooting anyway, as there were only a couple of bullets left for the rifle and besides we'd lost interest. But the wine tonic was still effective, we built the fire up, chewed on a couple of stale sandwiches and as night fell we were all gathered around the fire. Some, including me, were dozing, some trying to sing harmony (you can imagine the sound) and the others? Well, I don't know. The next thing I knew someone was shaking me awake.

“Wake up. Tui, wake up.”

I sat up suddenly; through the haze, I sensed something wrong, my in-built “red light” full on now.

“Whatsit?” I muttered.

“Gina's' gone and shot herself in the arm. It's only a flesh wound, but she's bleeding badly. She'll have to go to the doctor.”

I came fully awake with a thud.

“Why?” I gasped. “Why should she do such a thing - bloody fool. The cops'll be back sure now.”

Our wounded hostess was helped from the bathroom where two of the others, the older woman included, had bathed and dressed the wound as best they could. I again asked what it was all about. The only answer I could get was it was unrequited love, the effects of the wine tonic adding to a “down” mood. The idea was to say it was an accident while handling a gun. I'd heard enough - I didn't ask the name of the recipient of the unrequited

love. Actually, I knew, but didn't want to. I merely said "adios, amigos" and headed for Hollywood Hills and home, which suddenly looked mighty good to me. Brother! the situations I could get into without even trying. I made sure I never crossed their paths again, nor did I ever hear the outcome of the incident, so I guess they got away with it. Through the long years I've attended several wild parties, but that one scared the hell out of me and rightly so.

I felt seedy for days, but one good side-effect was I determined to pull myself together, swallow my pride and go out to MGM to talk to Woody Van Dyke. I should have done so when I returned, but, as with the cottage it was hard to face the studio where I'd been so happy - always able to drop in on Sol, which had cheered both of us. However, now money was getting short; I'd turned in most of my policies and just had to get to work. I refused to borrow money and, of course, hadn't sent any to New Zealand since my return. I'd cashed in my round-world steam ship tickets and given Glory all the money, thinking there was a ten thousand dollar insurance policy awaiting me at home. It had been a clear understanding with Sol that such a policy existed for my benefit, just in case. Being scatter-brained, I'd not inquired into it and I came to regret that. I never received the policy or the money and I never solved the mystery of what happened to it. I tried to sort out my life anew, but mostly became more confused.

A few days later I spruced up and drove out to Culver City, parked in my old spot and made for the studio gates. I'd made an appointment with Woody, so a pass awaited me, but that was another unpleasant necessity. When Sol was at MGM I had free access at all times, but no longer, unless I had a pass or a friend inside. As I entered the gate my heart contracted as I looked up at Sol's office windows. I wanted to cry and run away out of the place altogether. I bit hard on my lip and plodded on to Woody's office, where I received condolences and a promise of

work just about to start – dear dependable Woody, he also went too young.



Many weeks later I was still working in *Naughty Marietta*, which starred Nelson Eddy, a dear man, and Jeanette Macdonald. This was the first of many film operettas they did successfully together, under Woody’s guidance. It was a splendid cast and a great bunch of people. With Woody in charge sometimes the hours were long and the work tedious, but I loved musicals and the many months of work were more than acceptable to my bank balance. Nevertheless my dissatisfaction and frustration kept growing because of the lack of real opportunity.

With the passing of time, Glory, too, was wondering why I was getting nowhere. She also mentioned marriage more than once, which only made me angry, giving me an excuse for a binge of booze and self-pity. My recent trip had given me itchy feet and an urge for more. I considered the work I was getting from the Studios to be little better than factory work and about as interesting. Entering the studio gates early in the morning a fellow worker might call out,

“Hi, good morning Tui.”

All I could reply sourly was,

“What is good about it?”

That expression has stuck around today, along with tinted fingernails and dark glasses – I was one of the, if not the, first to introduce these abominations to Hollywood.

CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

More years slipped by and I slipped right along with them. I did a few “gigs” now and then for Eddie Goulding, Woody and other friends, but by now I was almost disliking the little town I’d so loved in the twenties. More drinking, less work and a friend who’d been a big star at Paramount offered to buy my mink coat, a beautiful one I’d had for years, but which still looked as new. The friend wanted a large cape made of it, so left me the collar and cuffs; I still have them as well as the buttons. In desperation I decided on the alcohol “cure”, using the money for the coat. There were several such “cure” places around Los Angeles, but in my opinion they are little more than a joke. Alcoholics Anonymous was unheard of then. I took the plunge – they took the money; it was a hideous experience, which I’m afraid many people let themselves in for and I’ve never met anyone who was really cured by such a place.

Patients were put in a private room and fed whisky until it almost literally ran out of their ears, then while still violently ill, they were fed more, forcibly. This went on for a couple of days and naturally one became vague about times and events. After the patient became “sufficiently” ill, they were weaned off and then nearly enema-ed to death. It took about a week in all and several hundred dollars – pretty expensive then. I emerged, a pale and shaky object, but at least I had no desire to drink, then.

Although relieved to think I’d finished with the booze, my other problems were still there. I’d written to Glory a few weeks before, telling her how badly I was faring and some time later her reply came in the form of a cable, saying she’d booked and paid for my passage on the S.S. *Monterey*. I accepted with mixed feelings, for, although disenchanted with Hollywood in the working field, it still was my home, my few friends were there and I hadn’t enjoyed my stay in New Zealand last time. Of course, I told myself it was because of Sol’s death, but didn’t really convince myself it was true. The old nightmares started again. For years I’d had one recurring dream; I was standing on

a small strip of land with the ocean on both sides threatening to engulf me. I struggled desperately to get to higher ground and save myself. The water never did get me, as usually I woke up or escaped in time, but it was always a terrifying feeling, and no aid to a good night's sleep.

My itchy feet got the better of me and I boarded the *Monterey* sober, with hope in my heart, but sadness, too, for all I had lost in Rainbow land. The year was 1937.

I had insisted on going alone to board the ship at Wilmington and felt insecure, lonely and homesick before the voyage even started; naturally, I suppose, as I'd been going through a pretty hard time. The sailing time wasn't until late at night, so after settling into my Cabin, I returned to the deck to sit and brood. My mind returned to the early days of training and working in the travelling shows, the struggle to get a start in Hollywood and seeming to succeed, only to lose out. It all seemed to have been so useless. I realised that most of my failures were my own fault, but in some small defence I must say that fate certainly played her part. I fantasised on my family, remembering them as they were when we were children and assuming in my daydream they were still the same; nothing could have been further from the truth. Sure, Glory had a soft spot for me at all times, but they were naturally all busy with their own lives, although when they had material needs they still made demands on me. But I loved them all my life and still miss them today.

I thought of some of the wonders I'd seen, Albert Einstein, the 1932 Olympic Games, Lindberg's ticker-tape parade through Los Angeles after his solo flight across the Atlantic, the Graf Zeppelin and Hugo Eckener, the Motion Picture electric parade for Franklin Roosevelt and of being close enough to touch him. He was the only president I ever voted for and I'd do it again. I remembered the earthquakes, the floods and the night it snowed in Hollywood, seeing the red Pacific-Electric street cars disappear from Hollywood Boulevard, which became Santa Claus Lane at Christmas time, with a tree tied to each lamp

post; the little radio stations joining the huge networks such as CBS, NBC and ABC; the growing seclusion of the picture studios; the stars coming and going much more frequently than they used to. My heart welled with tenderness for many dear people I'd known and who were no longer there.

Of course, Sol was never out of my thoughts. I missed and loved him almost unbearably, hence my solid drinking for two wasted years and letting everything slip away. Nobody could or would ever take his place. I also missed dear Minnie, the lady who had looked after me and my dwellings for ten years. During the depression Sol had found her husband a good job at MGM as they had three little boys to support; all became World War II heroes, I heard later. A tear trickled down my cheek, quickly followed by another until I dissolved into a silent, hopeless weep. Out of the gloom the figure of a man materialised; he was young and handsome.

"Hello there," he said cheerfully.

I averted my face, wiping my tears as I did so. He flopped down on a chair beside me.

"Mind if I join you? You seem upset."

I murmured some reply; we were still at the dock, I was lonely and he seemed pleasant, young and handsome. He told me his name and cheerily chatted about how he was going home to Honolulu. I unhappily told him I was leaving my home and going to New Zealand.

"Never mind, cheer up. You'll be back soon."

I was not so sure: I felt uncertain already. His name was George Goss, he was unmarried and lived with his parents and sister in Honolulu. We became good friends on the voyage and corresponded for some years afterward. Every time I passed through Honolulu on subsequent trips he met the ship and entertained me while we were ashore, he was a fine young man; I tried to trace him after Pearl Harbour, without success - I hope he escaped the attack.

Soon we were laughing and chatting and much of my despair disappeared. George said he'd already met some interesting fellows aboard; they were travelling as far as Pago Pago in western Samoa to join Captain Musick and a few other people who already were there. They were the original trail blazers for the now famous Pan American Airways. At that time the only means of travel over those vast distances was the occasional flying boat and ships.

"Come into the lounge and I'll introduce you. The bar won't be open until we sail, but then we can have a drink," George said.

I agreed, but didn't add that I was still on the wagon after six months sobriety and intended to remain that way. It was hard to resist the temptation on a long sea voyage, though. We entered the lounge and George introduced me to three or four men of varying ages. I loved them; you couldn't wish for nicer guys. It didn't bother them a bit that I wouldn't have a drink; I just told them it didn't agree with me, a masterpiece of understatement!

I'd get my uke, they'd get whatever drinks they wanted and we'd gather in one of their cabins to sing, yarn and just have good clean fun. George was right there with us, a smiling man, always ready for some fun. He was a sailing fanatic and belonged to a sailing boat club in Hawaii. The days passed pleasantly, then George left the ship at Honolulu, but later we met so he could take us for wonderful drives around the island in his car. The place was vastly changed from my first visit and I found it too Americanised and new. From a lush tropical South Sea island it had become a thriving, hustling, bristling type city. The few "front" beach houses and the old Moana Hotel on Waikiki Beach were now joined by the big and luxurious new Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Dear old Diamond Head always looked the same - a thrilling sight. Heavens! when I look at the place now on television I can't believe my eyes; it's a pleasure to be able to look back, with the help of the dozens of pictures I took there.

We said a fond and emotional – it’s always a pretty emotional one – Aloha to George in Hawaii. He came to the quay and put leis around our necks, gorgeous ginger-flowered ones and an extra special one for me. He told us not to forget to toss them overboard as the ship left the harbour; it seemed a shame to keep something so lovely for such a short time, but we did as bidden and mine, at least, must have made it back to shore, for I returned many times in the next four years.

This trip the passengers were far more congenial than on the previous one. Happily there were at least a few other good sports aboard, some nearing middle age, perhaps having a holiday from married life and getting away from it all. There were also a few happily married couples. We played the usual deck sports and made some real fun with contests. As usual my record player worked overtime. I never go anywhere without music. The transistor radio and cassette players make it easy today, but then it was the heavy seventy-eights, Bing, Tony Martin, the Dorseys, Francis Langford – I’d have carried them on my back if necessary. The Pan Am boys and their “sweetheart”, as I proudly became known, lugged the player up to the boat deck on those incredible moonlight nights and, to the lulling swaying of the ship, we’d listen in enchantment. No stabilisers on those ships; they looked, smelled and acted like ships and I madly loved those original Matson Liners.

Soon our audience would grow and we’d sing and hum along. It was all poignantly beautiful, especially in the light of what was to happen in such a short time in the Pacific. It was no trouble to stay sober and I know that also made the trip more enjoyable for me. Some of the ladies still enjoyed their Pimms No. 1 or whatever, no temptation to me at all, I assure you, but they were moderate drinkers and I still had to learn. The five days to Pago Pago passed all too quickly – great company, glorious weather and a romance charged atmosphere. No wonder writers eulogise these things, especially as we grow older; it’s a pity everybody doesn’t experience them when young.

There was a special ship's dinner for the Pan American boys the night before we swayed into Pago Pago harbour. The chief steward did us proud; it was gay, friendly and full of good humour. I abstained from booze, but still had a helluva happy time, although a little wistful at the thought of losing splendid friends so soon. I really did think of them as friends and a lovely letter from the boys, which reached me in New Zealand by the next boat, echoed my sentiments. None of us dreamed of the tragic meeting some of us were to have later and thank God we didn't or I think I'd have taken another ship. The memory even now brings pain.

They stood on the quay to watch us sail the next evening; we waved and threw kisses until they were out of sight. I felt a little lost with all of my gentlemen friends gone, but there were a few good types left and we enjoyed ourselves until we reached Suva where we had the usual day's outing and a fine lunch at the Grand Pacific Hotel. I poked around the museum and enjoyed the smelly township, but a bigger thrill was when we arrived in Auckland to see Glory, my two brothers and a couple of their friends all waiting on the wharf to meet me. I was very happy and in retrospect I'm glad of that time for it was one of the very few times we four, Glory, my brothers and I, were together as adults.

CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

It had been a "good-time" trip and I felt well and continued saying "no" to booze all through this New Zealand visit when I stayed with my mother's travelling shows for about four months. It was Spring and the weather good, which can be unusual for New Zealand. I enjoyed being on the road once more and reliving, to a certain extent, the old times doing the A. & P. shows. I helped out all I could, which was not a great deal.

The older of my young brothers, Clyde, disliked show life and had left some time ago to work in Auckland. He was a quiet, reliable man who later spent six years in the New Zealand

medical corps during World War Two. I believe my natural brother, whom I never met, also served his country for six years in that horrible affair. My youngest brother, Owen, my mother loved and depended upon greatly, which was understandable - he stayed with her all through those good years and was the backbone of her shows. He was a splendid performer. He joined the Australian army Ninth Division and went to the Middle East. I'm told he was the only Aussie soldier to stow away to go to war - with his mates. He did so because they were going to be split up. His action was considered amusing more than anything and he was only slightly reprimanded. He was the youngest of my family and died several years ago - Clyde, only last year; thus we go one by one.⁵⁰

This trip I got along fairly well with the family and show crowd, but I did realise, in many ways, I was now completely American; there was so much I didn't understand or like about New Zealand now and often felt "out of it", often lonely and longing for home. I had thought Glory and I would be closer, but we weren't. Of course she had changed the people in her life which was natural after so many years. It was a pity though, as two of her new people were to cause her a great deal of sorrow later.

During those few months we wandered up and down the country, showing in both the North and South Islands. We passed from 1937 to 1938 in the deep of the South Island, having spent Christmas in Invercargill. Every New Zealander knows the southernmost part of the South Island belongs to the Scots and how my mother loved them. I think the pipe bands there surpass those in Scotland and they certainly always gave me a thrill. I could, of course, be lynched for that statement or, perhaps, force-fed haggis; but I do love tartan. No - we haven't any Scots blood; a powerful lot of green though and yes, I know it shows and yes, I agree we must all be mad or else why would our people allow what is going on in Ireland in the supposedly civilised years of the twentieth century?

As 1938 progressed I became more unsettled and homesick. Glory was understanding and said we would be returning to Auckland soon. After talking it over we decided I'd best go home; perhaps things would be better this time and perhaps by now there would be work for everyone. I helped all I could around the show, selling tickets and watching the door and my return fare was on a theatrical rate, so very reasonable. Back in Auckland when my return ticket was booked, Clyde and friends gave several lovely farewell parties - I wish they could know these years later I'm still grateful and remember the fun - vividly; those marvellous imitations of Mae West and Theda Bara! I, of course, could give a little first hand information. I gave my great imitation, both vocal and gesture, of Marlene Dietrich - I guess it wasn't too bad as I was always asked to do it again, I wasn't bad as Chevalier either, oh well, once a "ham"....

When we sailed from Auckland late one evening the biggest crowd ever came to wish me "bon voyage". New Zealand twilight is lovely but gave one a wistful feeling. We were well away from the wharves, but I could still hear the farewell coo-ees and the Maori farewell. I cried openly and wondered why we restless spirits never knew where we belonged.

Pago Pago brought a heart breaking meeting - we picked up those who were left of my Pan American buddies. They had come to the island so happy, confident they would blaze the trail for flying boats crossing the Pacific. I'd heard the ghastly news while still in New Zealand - an aircraft had blown up near Pago Pago, killing Captain Musick and several others. It was terribly upsetting to hear of such a fate for people with whom I'd been so friendly on the journey out. Only a couple of the flyers came on board - one was the man I'd been closest to and who had written to me in New Zealand. He told me more details of the tragedy saying it had left the survivors very low mentally. They were particularly worried about one member. My friend also said the accident would put the flight schedule way back and, between this tragic event and even more tragic war, the schedule

was delayed for several years, unfortunately, but we all know Pan American Airways finally got going just about everywhere, although not in flying boats.

It was an uneventful journey back to Los Angeles; most of the passengers kept to themselves, shut in their cabins. I read almost constantly in mine. I had notified only two people of my imminent homecoming – one was my lifelong friend and second mother, Olive Ann Pixley. The world lost her some years ago – a brilliant, magnificent woman, well known and loved wherever she travelled. A poetess and attorney-at-law, she was, at the time, the only woman doing her job at the Immigration and Naturalisation Department. Her achievements were the more praiseworthy as she'd been crippled since a childhood accident and could walk only with the aid of crutches. Olive came from a family of great Americans, true pioneers, who came west by covered waggon. Her father died young due to illness contracted during the Civil War. Olive bore her own, and others', burdens like the great American she was.

She came to Australia many times to visit me and she, also, fell under its spell, perhaps because it reminded her of early days in Kansas, Colorado and, finally, California. It was to Olive's friendly, motherly advice I should have returned, but, again, I made the wrong decision. We all must pay for our mistakes, be they made wantonly, through ignorance or without malice, and even I, with my thick hide, was beginning to realise this, but I still kept on making them, so the price got higher.

Each time I returned to Hollywood now, I knew and liked it and its inhabitants less. By this time I was a mess, mentally and physically, restless beyond endurance, between two worlds and homesick for both. Work was scarce for me, rushing frantically about, never able to settle to anything. Studio controls had become more strict and demanding. Discontent was rife in the industry. Personal freedom was almost non-existent for the stars and work for lesser players at a premium. Central Casting will have had to improve one hundred percent now for me to give it

even a D rating. There were a few good casting directors and some very bad ones. As in all else, of course, it was “who you know” and about this time I didn’t “know” too many and vice versa.

I frequented the Hawaiian Paradise nightclub and other “Island” night spots, partly through nostalgia and partly also, because I’d taken to the bottle again. I’d picked up a handy skill from the Maoris while I was a child – how to make flower leis, the strung garlands to hang around the necks of people arriving and leaving the South Sea Islands. A friend who worked at the Hawaiian Paradise suggested I make them in my spare time and the management would sell them. I agreed, so between some short stints, mostly at MGM this little job helped considerably.

Ever restless and dissatisfied, towards the end of 1938 I was, once again, on the high seas, bound for New Zealand. Glory had decided to branch out by adding a small Eat joint to the show. She had sent funds to buy hot dog machines. I bought the goods for them and was to help run the stand; so paying my way.

During this short stay in Hollywood I’d attended a few parties and, although I have no right to judge anybody and am far from a prude, I didn’t like what I saw. I greatly disliked the way the “scene” was changing and my few dear friends were just that, only a few left now. They undoubtedly thought I was a nut, but also envied me my adventures. I don’t regret any of it; to me, no travel is wasted. But – and that was a big rub – I was drinking and I’m not going to say I could drink well, because I couldn’t. It took one helluva knock for me finally, to wake up to that caper – also some hard work and seemingly wasted years.

This visit, I decidedly didn’t get along with my relatives, or with many other people, and took to heavy drinking using this as an excuse.

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

A friend invited me to visit his homeland, Australia, with him. It was my first visit and he was anxious to show his country off to me. Three stormy days on the Tasman is a great experience and I loved every minute of it, as usual. The Sydney Harbour Bridge impressed me enormously, but then, so did Sydney itself and the rest of Australia. We “trained it” right up the east coast into Queensland, stayed overnight in Brisbane and then reboarded the train for a thousand or more wild miles up to Cairns in the north. It was a glorious sight in 1938.

We spent a couple of weeks on the tiny coral outcrop on the Great Barrier Reef, Green Island, living in pup tents. Two men ran a small kiosk, selling meals, on the island; they rented us the tents. Transport to and from this idyllic spot was by pearling lugger and we four had it to ourselves – only one small party of tourists came for a day’s outing the whole two weeks. No glass bottom boats or other tourists attractions existed then; it was just nature’s unpolluted, unspoiled loneliness, I adored it.

To my sorrow our idyll was cut short when my friend had to return to New Zealand on urgent business. we took a coastal steamer from Cairns, sailing inside the Barrier Reef to its end at Brisbane, where the Story Bridge was only half completed, and from there to Sydney. Those tropic nights I’ll never forget; dear God it was beautiful.

My poor friend took to the Tasman again, but I stayed awhile in Sydney to become acquainted – a fatal error then if one wanted to “Get Away From It All” as my dear friend Cedric Belfrage titled his best seller. I fell in love with Australia, a feeling which has remained, sometimes a love-hate affair, but I always end up loving it again. Within a few weeks I was completely bemused by the country and its people. I met a few interesting show business folk at parties – George Wallace Senior, among them. I loved Kings Cross and vowed I’d return, although I knew I was going back to the States, with my passage booked and paid for.

Back in New Zealand, the rift between me and my family had widened – I think jealousy played a part, so I travelled with my friend in the short time remaining, visiting old loved places and people.

While I was still on the move, suddenly, we were at war – or, at least, so far, Britain was. It was 1939. There was little news in New Zealand about the war and nobody seemed to take it too seriously. Even the British seemed to treat it as a bit of a giggle. America, of course, was years from being involved. We set off bound for Auckland so that I could join my ship for home – I was still calling Hollywood home.

Staying a couple of days at Hamilton, I again sat on the banks of the great and beautiful Waikato River, which wasn't far away. I'd had a few scotches and was broody, undecided and felt lost. I had to smile wryly when I thought of how different it was from the time, all those years ago, when I'd sat, near this same river, planning a life of busy wealth and fame... fortune for all... oh, I'd had more of fortune than most along the way, but it had been misdirected. As real communication seemed hopelessly impossible between my folks and self, I determined this would be my last visit to the land of my birth. One of the most beautiful countries on earth, it still has its own spot in my heart and doubtless many people are happy there, but I never was, nor was I likely to be. So, once more I left, but quietly and alone – no farewell parties this time, I guess we all were pretty tired of that routine anyway.

My arrival back in the States was equally unspectacular. I shared accommodation with a friend and her child, whose care seemed to fall my lot a good deal while she worked. Woody was making a picture, but shooting had already started so there was nothing he could do about getting me a part. He said he would soon have something for me and would tell other directors I was back. People were on the move and I'd completely lost touch with most of them – with reality, too, I now know.

The few folk I did run into were the “bar” type (I should talk, what was I doing there?). I drank fancy cocktails from coconut shells while regaling my willing “shouting” companions with wondrous tales of the great wide Land I’d discovered “down under”. They listened breathlessly and willingly “shouted” more drinks in order to keep the lurid tales of “far off places”, going. I boasted,

“I’m going back there. It’s like it was here, once. I don’t like this place now – I just don’t like it.”

Tears dropped into my grog; there’s nothing like self pity for a bit of drama.

My friends reacted, “Oh no Tui, you mustn’t go back... crocodiles and wild black people everywhere... you’ll be killed, we mustn’t let you go.”

“Don’t be bloody silly,” I snorted. “Don’t you realise there are a couple of large cities there? Why, Sydney’s as big as San Francisco, well – nearly anyway.”

Whether this was true or not, I didn’t know. But I did know Sydney was pretty big. My friends didn’t believe me and shuddered at the thought of all those kangaroos attacking me en masse. We drifted from one “water hole” to another, from Olvera Street in Mexico-town, L.A. to North Hollywood over Cahuenga Pass, down to Santa Monica and Venice Beaches – oh, no doubt about it, it was a real pub-crawl. I began waking up to find I’d slept on some friend’s couch – sometimes a friend only recently met... I, who had always insisted on being under my own roof.

The war was gradually receiving more and more space in our daily newspapers. The stand taken by the Hearst papers seemed slightly pro-German, which angered many people. Then a radio station announced it was going to broadcast a blow-by-blow description of the evacuation of Dunkirk – and it did just that. I sat by the radio day and night, listening to the whole thing; I cried a lot and, when it was over I began to realise for the first time, just how serious the war was becoming. It made me think very

seriously. I was on a complete merry-go-round and somehow I had to get off – but how? And where to go?

Ever impatient, I wrote to Glory and her answer made up my mind. She had taken her show and its people to Australia; I think I'd sold her on the place, which sometimes worries me as I wonder if she'd have been happier in New Zealand. It was well into 1940 and I'd made my decision – I'd go to Australia and start a new life there.

AUSTRALIA

CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

I said hasty farewells to one old friend and one of recent times and then I was on one of my beloved Matson liners, bound for Tasmania, where my folks were touring. It was October 16, 1940, my birthday was just three days off. I was still young, vital and, I'm told, attractive, and I still drank too much. The ship was fully booked to Honolulu; an American flag was painted the full length either side of the ship and it was brightly floodlit at night. It was known that submarines were already prowling in the deep, watching all the surface craft. I had said goodbye, for the last time to my once-so-loved California.

We'd never been so loaded for the five days crossing to Honolulu and it turned out to be a mixed bag indeed – carpenters, tinkers, tailors, soldiers, sailors, workers of all description, we had 'em all. It made for loads of fun – a very bright crossing indeed. I adored being pursued by men of all types – and why not? That was normal, then. There was liquor aplenty, but one didn't seem to have so much time to imbibe, there were too many other things to do.

Flash bulbs were popping as I boarded at San Pedro. I didn't bother to enquire as to the quarry, so a delightful surprise awaited me as they turned out to have been for the also-departing Noël Coward. He was a brilliant, witty, altogether delightful man,

when you really knew him. We saw much of each other on this fascinating voyage, which took more than a month to Sydney, Australia. It was undoubtedly a dangerous trip, but, at the time, a great adventure.

Before we left the Matson Line had sent us all telegrams saying they had rerouted the ship through parts of the Orient; they did not say which parts, nor would they tell us when we enquired. We were given the opportunity to cancel our tickets and friends begged me to do so; I nearly did. I still wonder - had I stayed, would I have found more happiness than I found here, in Australia? For, much as I love the place, I've had no chance of success and found little happiness. Many factors contributed to this - some to do with Australians, some with my health, family, and general character. Also, the aftermath of World War II had its ghastly effects on the human race... undernourishment of three-quarters of the world's people, rampant racial hatreds in all countries, misleading cults and sects exploiting the young and ignorant, accepted religions becoming wishy-washy and dropping many disciplines to placate a permissive society which has caused the break-down of family life, and greed, our old friend; governments, politicians, big business and cartels with their neighbourly slogan, "I'm alright Jack and bugger you." But it serves us bloody right, because it is quite truly said we get the government we deserve. Too many people rubbish the sound observation of Arthur Shopenhauer that, "All the world and life are essentially evil." It certainly looks like it, for on this globe, not too far from where I write this, I'm told a herd of humans still have a sneak taste of an occasional unsuspecting homo-sapiens. Well, I guess I don't need to worry them - too tough an old bird now.

But, to return to 1940 and the hustling, beautiful ship - parties, music, drinking and whoopee. Horse racing games were very popular and gambling of all kinds abounded, which would have pleased most Australians immensely. I was popular and revelled in the merry-making. I'm sure glad I did - God knows,

it had to last me a long time. A few of us became friendly and corresponded for a time, but after Pearl Harbour, I heard no more from my ship-board friends.

Early one morning we glided quietly into Honolulu and the ship emptied in no time at all. A nun, who had come aboard from Boston, bound for Wellington, New Zealand asked me to accompany her to a convent which she had never visited before. She didn't want to go alone, and I willingly obliged, but she was escorted back to the ship by her friends. I don't think she altogether approved of me - understandably, being from Hollywood. I think it was a case of "any port in a storm", but we tolerated each other and I accompanied her in each of the ports at which we landed.

After having performed this small service I flew off to join my friends for a day and night on the town. Oddly, on this visit, we were not to sail until early next morning; usually we stayed only eight or nine hours. Honolulu was rapidly spreading and that night I visited some of the "dives" which had opened up on the waterfront. Until this visit I'd not known of their existence, if they had been there at all. They certainly were wild and I was fascinated, but glad I had good protection. I wouldn't have liked to go there alone. I couldn't help noticing the predominance of military and naval uniforms. It was just like *From Here to Eternity* - and that movie brought back memories later. We staggered aboard after midnight, not knowing where we were bound for and certainly not caring that night.

Next morning, not feeling exactly on top of form, I took my time getting up, missing breakfast with pleasure. A discreet tap at the door and my cabin steward entered; we knew each other of old. He brought me tea and toast and news. I wondered why he had so much time to spend chatting to me and said so.

"Why not? We've only six bloody passengers, a dog and a parrot."

He sounded disgusted. I'd known hundreds of people were disembarking at Hawaii, but not that we were to be deserted to

this extent. He said that as, in reality, there were only about fifty passengers left, the company had decided it would be one class for all, instead of the usual first class and cabin. His other news rocked me a bit. I muttered,

“I guess we’re bound for Hong Kong?” We’d decided this earlier.

“Hell no. Hang onto your hat - we sailed under sealed orders last night; our destination has just been pinned on the notice board,

“Okay, okay, already! Where?”

He smirked, “Japan, Yokohama: nine dreary days of it - but don’t worry too much. You’re going to wish you’d stayed in L.A. before the day’s out, especially as you feel a teeny bit queasy.”

He kept on grinning and we joshed a lot, as old friends do.

“I’ll bite, buster. What’s the catch?” I finally said.

“Today you start getting your shots; six or more, I’m told. There’s typhoid, smallpox and cholera that I know of and more.”

I was aghast. I’d forgotten we’d have this to contend with. Hypercritical nostalgia took over and I thought back to the peaceful Cathedral on Fort street, Honolulu, where Sister Basil and I had visited before I left. Then, by way of contrast, I thought of the visit to the Shamrock Cafe and dinner in Chinatown after the cathedral visit. Conscience pricking? You’re damn right!

Seas had been unusually rough in the five days from the mainland to Hawaii, but they were calm right now and the weather beautiful. Why the hell hadn’t I stayed on Oahu? Then I remembered Noël Coward’s presence aboard and cheered up. I picked up the phone and rang him; “Of course we’d meet for cocktails.” We’d forgotten the shots and they certainly “shot” the cocktail idea, temporarily. We lined up to be jabbed, scratched and pricked and then, for a few days afterwards, made protesting noises if anyone looked like stirring a breeze near us in passing. We glared and grabbed our arms, ducking and dodging being touched.

Of course the weather remained calm and balmy now; we were just “barmy” after three days of shots. Most were content with their own company; I certainly was and claimed my favorite spot on the boat deck, sitting alone in my cubby hole to recuperate and meditate, thinking back and wondering forward. Grief was still on me at having been forced to leave my truest and dearest little pal behind forever. Stock laws were tough in Australasia but, I guess, necessarily. Puea, my tiny Pekinese, was so wise, patient and loving, I still miss her. Although she was left in good hands it was small consolation to my sad heart for the loss of a close friend. I smiled wryly remembering how Puea so obviously hated the smell of liquor on my breath. If I could send a message to wherever she is, it would be that she was right. Perhaps she and Sol are together, for he loved her too. He had almost begged me to let Puea work as Marie Dressler’s dog in *Grand Hotel*. He did, for we loved Marie who was most kind, but even Puea’s tiny weight was too much for her if filming was prolonged; the sands were running out for Marie.



Ramon Novarro, Myrna Loy and Puea in *The Barbarian*.

Sol also put Puea in *The Barbarian* with the melancholy, handsome Ramon Navarro. He was so gentle and polite, nobody could have foreseen the wickedness of those who caused Ramon's grizzly end.⁵¹ Myrna Loy was Puea's mistress in that film. Marion Davies also had my little friend in *Blondie of the Follies*, but as Miss Davies decided she didn't like me, hence her hostility, I decided against seeing that show. So, my darling Puea, you also were a personality in dear old M.G.M.'s great days and daze. Pekinese are not the "in" dogs these days, and I madly love all dogs and most animals, but no other dog, thing or person can ever have Puea's bit of my battered old heart.

Unnoticed by me, a change was taking place, as I dreamed. I shivered, pulling my jacket closer around me. Clouds scurried across the moon like women dashing to a clothing sale, the deep water had lost its sad blue, turning a sulky grey. I fled to the light and warmth below decks. Morning found us being lashed by the tail of a great dinosaur, or rather, that's what it felt like, but it was a typhoon, prevalent in these waters. It was too rough to socialise much, so I just lay in my bed - the Matson Line had lovely bamboo beds instead of bunks in their spacious cabins - and continued my musings back to Hollywood.

There was no doubt that the world's strangest and greatest got to Hollywood sooner or later in that fantastic era. Even the youngest member of the notorious Dalton Gang, Emmet, had lived right there along with us until 1937, before dying in his late sixties or early seventies. The rest of the gang had been shot long before, about 1882 or 92 in Coffeyville. Emmet had served many years in jail, then received a full pardon from President Teddy Roosevelt. The advent of early sound brought a few interesting performers, who had lasted; Bette Davis is the one who immediately springs to mind, Barbara Stanwyck is another, but she seems now to have retired. Joan Crawford is admired for her enduring "guts". Katherine Hepburn, also, obviously has her following, but I feel she will remain famous most for her long-standing relationship with the late, great Spencer Tracy. The

movie world now has few enduring actors; a couple of girls like Glenda Jackson and Jane Fonda and a few of the older men remain near the top, but durability seems a thing of the past. However, rolling up and down and side to side on the liner en route to Japan, before World War II, 1940, these latter names were not even dreamed of.

All that day we rode out the storm along with the ship. Making myself presentable I went topside to break the monotony. On deck a few hardy souls were braving the tossing and watching the procession of other ships with broken masts and rigging limping slowly and painfully from the fury of the typhoon's centre toward their home ports. Seeing them I was thankful we only received the "tail lash".

After lunch Noël Coward met me in the bar lounge and we reminisced about old times whilst partaking of some delightful concoctions invented by my good friend the barkeep. I knew 'em all (barmen) which enhances the past sometimes, although seldom the future. Merrily we chatted about the Charlot Review, Bea Lillie, Gertie Lawrence and Jack Buchanan, also mentioning a few others such as Eric Blore and Hugh St Clair.



Noël Coward

We didn't realise it then, but shortly, ghastly circumstances were to make us two of the few who intimately knew the last two Sir Robert Peels of that distinguished line. Of course, Bea's husband had already died tragically young by 1940, but little Bobby, forever the most important part of Bea's life, was young, handsome and vibrantly approaching manhood. He never reached it; a deranged ex-paper hanger named Hitler intervened. His "proglers of the sea" were taking a terrible toll in the Atlantic by 1942 - the last Sir Robert Peel, at the age of eighteen years, was among them.

Having no prior knowledge of this future horror, Noël and I "dished" a little theatrical news, cussed, drank and laughed a lot. However, the wise Noël made one serious remark which has remained with me all these years.

"Tui, what are you running away from?"

My mind gave me no answer and I could only reply truthfully, that I wasn't aware I was running. Noël smiled in his enigmatic way and dropped the subject. I felt strangely disturbed and slightly annoyed without knowing why, but that chance remark wasn't forgotten.

The sea behaved itself and we had a great day and evening. I won a Jack Pot on the slot machine and "shouted" for all. We were closing rapidly in on Japan now and boredom was fading. I tottered off to bed late that night full of cheer and anticipation.

The following day Noël and I were leaning on the ship's rail after taking a few brisk turns on the deck; I suppose most people would have called us decadent types, for we folded early and collapsed at the rail for a breather. The weather had turned decidedly cold; the sea was stained a dirty, muddy colour, becoming more so as we progressed. It made us both shudder and the "Master" as he is now affectionately known, suggested the luxury of the bar.

“It’s question time for me now,” I said. “What’s a nice and very busy guy like you doing on a dead ship going to the ass-end of the world? – as if you’d tell me.”

“Yes Tui, I’ll tell you. I’m just on one of my jaunts. You know me love, take off when the mood takes me.”

“Oh,” I said. “What are you running away from?”

“Touché,” he grinned.

We laughed, linked arms and scrambled into the bar.

That night I awoke to find myself sitting bolt upright in bed. As usual I had a cabin to myself. It was dark, but light filtered through so I could see nobody had intruded. What had awakened me? Something was not as usual. It took me a few minutes to realise what it was, then it hit me. Of course! The engines had stopped. Momentary fear gripped me. Nothing was usual about this trip! sailing from Oahu under sealed orders, rerouted through the Orient to pick up American nationals – army and navy wives and children and the odd missionary. Although we had the comforting thought of the huge Stars and Stripes each side of the ship, floodlit like Grauman’s Theatre on opening night a tiny sense of uneasiness prevailed. Hearing voices in the gangway, I opened my door. Two grease monkeys were descending into the bowels of the ship.

“Hey, what gives?”

They grinned, “Woke you up too? Never known it to fail – if the engines stop, up pop the land-lubbers.”

“You’re damn right,” I said, “I’m aware we’re in dangerous waters, now cut the cackle and tell me what’s up.”

“Don’t worry kiddo. Just a slight break-down in one of the motors. We’ll be on our way again before you hit the sack.”

“Oh yeah?” I said in my most ladylike manner.

They smiled and were gone. The unusual incident was never explained. It had never happened before. I didn’t believe those two guys then and I still don’t. I think they’d spotted a mine, or worse. Pretty soon the engines did start and lulled me off to sleep again.

Despite the broken rest I arose early as was my habit when we were arriving in port. Going on deck we were dismayed. The weather was foul – thick, damp fog and muddy sea was all around as if to discourage us; it did me. There were other annoyances besides the weather. Entering Yokohama Harbour we were boarded by a number of business-like Japanese officials who demanded we produce our passports and then scrutinised them minutely, stamped them and handed them back, before proceeding to interrogate us in a very tongue-in-cheek manner. They seemed to know a bloody lot about me and my business. I was alert.

“You got cameras?” barked one official.

“No,” I lied.

“You flom Horrywood, you got rots a pictures, flilm?”

“No,” I lied again. I had a wicker hamper full of the stuff.

“We rika see pictures,” he persisted. “Why you go Austlalia flom Horrywood?”

Breathing deeply to contain my temper I explained as best I could – showbiz, mother, the lot. Disbelief was written clearly on the dear little sons of bitches.

“You no go ashore Japan!”

I didn’t believe it was happening. Angrily I said,

“I’m a guest of Mr Noël Coward’s to visit Tokyo for the day. Shall I call him?” I was seething inwardly.

“So solly. See later. No pictures – sure kid?”

Reeling, I went topside. My friend the bartender, Ray, was peering toward the sky, from which came a droning sound. I was about to explode at my treatment, but he silenced me.

“Watch this and be prepared to flatten yourself,” he muttered.

Quickly I looked up. Out of the early morning smoggy haze, three dive-bombers were hurtling straight for us. They came screaming towards us until it seemed certain they would hit, then abruptly pulled out of the dive. Ray growled deep in his throat,

“Rotten little bastards. They’d just as soon lay eggs on us, like they did to the *Panay*.”

I agreed – the Japanese had apologised for that particular “mistake” and we had believed them to oblige. Silently we watched their showy departure. Both Ray and I were old hands at sea, which somehow makes for a sixth sense. I’m sure at that moment we both knew some of the horror that was soon to come. Still silent we went our separate ways; my anger had dissolved into pure uneasiness. We were drawing in to the wharf and I wanted my first glimpse of the Orient; it was ironic: that it had to be Japan, but I saw much of great interest, and beauty. I’m glad it was before the war.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Today’s jetsetters leave me little to say about Japan; but naturally it was vastly different in 1940. The rain added to the general attraction – for me alone, I’m afraid. Most of the people on the wharf wore traditional Japanese dress. It was the women who were most charming to look at with their colourful clothing and pretty umbrellas. The umbrellas were identical to the many I’d used to help balance me in my tight wire act since childhood. (Eventually I walked without a balancing aid, which was far more difficult.) The women had a doll-like appearance; Glory always thought them exquisite and gave me Japanese dolls as a child. These women looked almost as unreal as those dolls – they wore the stilted shoe soles to keep their feet dry, just discovered by the western world a few years ago as high-fashion. The males were drab by comparison. Workers usually in loose pants and blouse, the more prosperous in western clothing.

Had I been more deep-thinking I would have observed many much more ominous objects, Yokohama is a very large port and when we entered it, a very busy one. It was positively overcrowded with vessels, mostly with containers. Cranes strained to their utmost unloading scrap iron, millions of tons of

it. Day and night the noise and activity continued in every corner. To add to the general melee, large numbers of sampans bobbed about, their occupants fishing or spying, probably both.

The torrential rain eased to a drizzle and I strained to see Fujiyama but was disappointed. I hoped it would be visible later. Numerous rickshaws buzzed around and, to my surprise, also a large number of odd little horse-drawn passenger vehicles and also horse-drawn carts for goods. I had somehow expected Japan to be more modern. Upon enquiry I was surprised to find that gasoline was severely rationed. This in late 1940, and yet we were surprised at Pearl Harbor! I've never understood that.

In Tokyo, the Ginza was a far cry from its brazen, noisy glittering smog of today. We were only a handful allowed ashore and we were much impressed, but like Liberace to his bank, the Japanese laughed all the way to their foundries. The rickshaws were quite "snappy" and could be closed to keep out the rain - it rains a lot in Japan. The quayside held all the usual curio vendors. Our short train trip from Yokohama to Tokyo had not been very interesting. I found the people's dress, manner and natty conveyances more so.

Within a few days we had picked up all the refugees who were to leave with us and on a glorious clear sun-lit morning we sailed. My wish to see Fujiyama was granted and I gasped at its beauty, so like Mount Egmont, under which I was born in New Zealand. Both always snow-capped - the two most perfect mountains in the world - Fujiyama perfect and Egmont's imperfection a small lump on her side like a child at her mother's hip, but all is beauty with them both and I stood awhile absorbing it.

Without warning, out of the sun roared the three cheeky dive-bombers and that did it! Having already disobeyed orders, I went below, loaded my camera with 35mm film and started shooting everything in sight through the portholes. They had threatened they would be watching and if they saw a camera would stop the ship and God knows what else. I was young and, I guess, stupid, certainly thoughtless. I shouldn't have

endangered the liberty of others – luckily I wasn't spotted, not even by our own people. I was bloody mad, though, about those bombers. Finally we were safely out of the harbour.

The rest of the day was interesting as we went through the inland sea south from Yokohama to China. In 1940 the Japanese were still at war with China, having invaded and occupied the country and they were there at Shanghai where we were headed. The Inland Sea was thickly mined. I was told we were the last American passenger liner out of Japan. I've never known for sure if that was so, but we did go to pick up fleeing refugees. It was our gain as sight-seers, as we went through the Japanese Archipelago on November 1, 1940. The sea was a ghastly yellow, but the rest of the view divine. Completely the reverse of my expectations of a low lying flat land covered with cherry and almond blossoms, Japan's coast was extremely rugged. The archipelago was dotted with tiny islands and little unbelievably smoking volcanoes rising vertically from the sea. I guessed they were just earth's safety valves. In the distance I could see the coast of China and fading on our right, the rugged coast of Honsiu.

I had never dreamed I'd ever see the parts of the Orient we were travelling through now; it was wonderful. Soon we entered the incredible mouth of the Yangtse-Kiang River, so wide I couldn't see either shore. The sights were thrilling – one is not long on the Yangtse before branching off into the river Wang Po, on which Shanghai is situated. The Wang Po is not very wide or deep but has a channel in which we anchored off shore. It was terribly overcrowded with sampans everywhere. People lived on them from birth to death, some never setting foot ashore.

We had come to Shanghai for similar reasons as Japan – to pick up refugees, but this time it took longer. On request we assembled in the main lounge for orders and advice from the captain. Quietly he told us those with weak stomachs had better remain on board, but if we did leave the ship on no account were we to cross the International Bridge into old China proper, as it

was referred to. If we disobeyed this order, no responsibility would be taken as we'd been warned. The Japanese held the International Bridge and had sentries posted at either end and at the middle.

A more pressing and immediate problem for us was the sampans crowding around, with many of their occupants trying to board us. The poor starving souls on these frail craft were desperate for sustenance of any kind. Given the chance they thrust long bamboo poles, fitted with hooks or nets, through our open portholes and, with great dexterity, snatched anything in reach. The captain ordered that all portholes were to be closed and locked and to remain so for our entire stay in Shanghai. We obeyed the order sadly. The worst sight for me was that of the poor creatures with the netted poles fighting for the refuse coming down our ship's chute. They screamed and yelled at each other, trying to claim some of the sloppy mess on which to feast; even the youngest, brightest and most thoughtless of us were stunned. But I was to see much worse ashore. Finally in despair, the captain had to order the fire hoses, four on each side of the ship, be turned full on the sampans. The hoses were very powerful and effective and remained on for the rest of our stay. The sampan people kept their distance then, but remained near looking helplessly and hopelessly at the ship of plenty.

My heart and others, were sickened at such suffering on so big a scale, but there was little we could do. The startling, but all too frequent sight of a dead body floating down the river past the ship didn't help our peace of mind either. To those of us who hadn't seen such sights it was devastating; there were those to whom it was simply a fact of life, but to me even now it is difficult to accept. People who lived their lives on the sampans had no place to bury their dead, neither did they have the money, so the river obliged. We were told the occasional body bore the marks of a bayonet; bullets were not wasted on miscreant Chinese who didn't doff their hats properly or bow quite low enough to the Japanese conquerors keeping sentry on the bridge in 1940.

Several times each day a Japanese-laden ferry boat pompously scurried up and down the Wang Po, bragging, like the dive bombers, not altogether idly as history now shows.

People arriving at Shanghai by boat travelled by sampan, ship's tender or rowboat to what was known as the Bund - then the long wharves. Some even swam. Ahead was the International Settlement with many countries having their small niche, such as the French Concession. The Bund meant waterfront to my eye, although the buildings were very fine, unlike most waterfronts. Some distance along the Bund, to the right of the International Settlement Shanghai's main street began its positively perilous narrow length, Nanking Road. On the two nearest corners stood the city's two best hotels - Palace, the lesser and Cathay, the magnificent. I likened the Cathay a little to the Ambassador in Los Angeles, although the Cathay is not so spread out. Its shops were wonderful and the view from its exquisite restaurant fantastic; the food and service also were out of this world. In the lobby I met Noël, who was giving a lively interview to seemingly endless reporters. After lunching together at the Cathay we took off on a fascinating sight-seeing junket. The narrow Nanking Road, whose street cars were practically on the sidewalk, crowded its way past all manner of gorgeous shops, not the least of which were the large department stores, Wing On and Sincere and Company. At the top of the road Bubbling Wells road crossed and I was informed many interesting "things" were "housed" there, but, alas! information was meagre and entry, for me, impossible. I was disappointed - ever one for adventure. "Anything" blanketed with such secrecy, could only conjure up the most "feelthy" imaginings in one such as I. However, the gambling here was the forerunner to Las Vegas and I liked the occasional flutter when I was young. Jai-li was a must when visiting Bubbling Wells Road and boy! Betting was fierce. Chinese come a close second to Australians when it comes to betting-fever.

Sister Basil whose Order was Missionary, included a leper station at Magagoi Fiji, had asked me to chaperone her to an enclosed convent in the French Concession. She had made her request while still aboard; perhaps the poor dear thought such a good example would rub off - alas! I'm so fun loving, it didn't. But I'm glad I went, I enjoyed going to Mass; there it seemed more significant. A Chinese priest was a novelty, but what entranced me most was a little Chinese lady of indeterminate age, literally hobbling on tiny and woefully bound feet, no larger than a year old baby's. Fascinated, I watched her stump right down the aisle to kneel at the Holy Communion rail. I cried; I couldn't see Sister Basil's face. Later we knocked on a heavy wooden door at the Convent. A slot opened and Sister Basil said something in French; the door opened instantly. She smiled at my surprise, thanked me and was gone.

We had a great day of fun and exploration as far as we were allowed, but I had arranged a secret mission of my own to bypass some of the restrictions. I made arrangements on the ship, but the adventure was not to take place until the next day; just two of us, sober, alert and disobeying (as usual for us). I'd seen the shell-hole in the wall of the Wing On store, a body or two floating down the river and the starving sampan duellers, but I had not been able to get over that barbed wire entangled International Bridge crossing the River.

On one of my many trips I'd become acquainted with a member of the ships staff - a big, rugged, good-looking and very athletic gentleman. We flirted mildly, joking and chatting whenever we met and liked each other, which is all by the way. I had a plan to cross that bridge and needed his help. I know restrictions were necessary travelling in such circumstances, but I thirst for knowledge and have a face full of wrinkles to show for the sorrow at what I learned and saw.

I talked fast and furiously and blinked my eyelashes (I had 'em then) at this sailor, who sensibly was unwilling to accede to my wishes and cross the bridge against orders. I used the

argument that I'd use heavy make-up (unheard of for me, except professionally) and dress "tarty"; he had only to be himself, a sailor. We'd get away with it as they would think I was merely a white Russian prostitute from Vladivostok - Shanghai was crowded with such women then. Finally my friend agreed. To his dismay, I insisted we walk across the bridge.

"At least a rickshaw?"

"No, I refuse to use one."

"Please?" He begged.

"Okay, we'll use one coming back, but only across the bridge."

He smiled. I was grimly determined. I had watched those poor old men of twenty years pulling the heavily loaded carts, running as swiftly as their tired legs could carry them to make a few extra bits of dirty paper called money. The equivalent of one dollar American would stuff a handbag full. I was very blonde and, with judicious application of make-up, I think I looked the part I was playing. Thrusting my hand through his, I said,

"Let's stroll buster - and I mean stroll, I want to see it all."

He was a good sport and did as bidden; although knowing the dangers far better than I, he hid his nervousness well. We walked on the opposite footwalk to that used by the sentries and Chinese, so could see everything clearly. The Chinese had to walk past the Japanese for a definite reason; every Chinese person had to bow very low and doff his cap before each sentry, without exception. Most were ordinary working people, men and women dressed in identical wide black trousers and blue tunics made of rough material. An occasional beautifully satin-clad mandarin type was interspersed with this motley group and they had to bow even lower than the rest. We saw one such man drop his hat as he bowed; as he scrambled to pick it up the sentry kicked his ass and, being already off-balance, he sprawled in the dirt. This caused the sentry quite a bit of amusement and he laughed loudly as he whacked the next passerby with his rifle, presumably to hurry him up. The elegant one was hurrying on,

dusting off his gorgeous satin hat. Neither person was injured, but oh, the indignity of it – I wondered would an Oriental ever forgive?

Occasionally some free soul had rebelled against this ridiculous “Shanghai gesture” and his was the odd body floating down the Wang Po, after having been quickly dispatched by a bayonet thrust. The rebellious were few in number; life is very precious and China proved that to me even more.

The scenes I’d witnessed and the walking already had me flushed with rage and heat. It was a hot dusty day and I longed for a cool drink. I had to “long” quite a while. Nobody seemed to take the slightest notice of us for which we were grateful.

On the other side of the bridge the aspect changed dramatically. “Old China proper” it was called – and it looked it. No great or even plain shops here; no bustling Nanking Road. Just a few broken and obviously falling down old wooden buildings housing God knows what. I could not distinguish a shop as such and was too afraid to enter any building to investigate. The few straggling people hanging around the dirt road were emaciated, apathetic and pitiful. One vendor with a bamboo pole and two tiny braziers each end was selling food – a morsel of something placed on a leaf – I didn’t recognise. Eager stringy hands snatched the edible savagely and scoffed it at lightning speed. Not once in the time I was in Shanghai did I see a rat, cat or dog. Quite simply these were pounced on and cooked on the little braziers and those who could, paid gladly for them.

One woman across the road from us mixed a little clay with water and greedily drank it. A number of skeleton-like women, barely covered with hessian or black cloth filthy with dirt and vermin, lay or sat in doorways. They seemed asleep, dead or unconscious. Many had tiny little bundles of bones, with barely recognisable arms, clinging around their necks. These outcasts attracted the attention of nobody and we were told that one

thousand of these pitiful wrecks, were found dead each month in Shanghai's Old China alone.

In the distance we could hear sporadic shell-fire; nobody took any notice of that either. I've never really recovered from what I saw in Old China. I felt like rushing back to St Joseph's Church in the French Concession and begging God's forgiveness, but I felt too ashamed. I saw no other signs of food except for those carrying the small braziers on poles, coals aglow, waiting to sell whatever they had edible. To add further misery to the horrible sights over there in "no man's land", were ragged hopeless lepers, roaming - I suspect illegally - free.

Rickshaw men accosted us in droves; we had to be firm almost to the point of rudeness in order to be left to roam at will. Finally I'd had enough; sickened and saddened, I said,

"The rickshaw."

My friends alacrity in complying was almost comical, but I couldn't laugh in that place. I didn't enjoy this, my only ever ride in a rickshaw - how could I when I knew the poor miserable creature pulling our two hulks would probably drop dead before reaching the age of thirty-two? At that age most of them die of a burst heart. We reached the International Bridge and I glared sourly at the Japanese sentries as we passed. I bade the driver, or beast of burden, stop as soon as we were across, alighted and walked off, leaving my friend to overpay him. I'd told him he'd better. We made straight for the best "water hole" in that goddam town, which happened to be by the Cathay Hotel as I've said, and I got blind, stinking drunk. They tell me - and it is born out by what we've seen on television - that today there is no longer an International settlement, no Concessions and the lovely Cathay Hotel is now the headquarters of the red Chinese in Shanghai. C'est la guerre. Candidly I wouldn't know a communist if I fell over him, but if I was starving and someone gave me a handful of rice in the place of clay and water, I'd sure as hell call him amigo.

I kept to the ship after that day's outing. Feeling depressed and distressed I had much to ponder. The constant hissing of water hoses, closed portholes and the suspicious looking flotsam and jetsam in the muddy water was depressing everybody. The missionaries, navy wives and children and other refugees straggled aboard and three or four days later we were passing the busy little Japanese Patrol Boats on our way to the Yangtse-Kiang River, out into the East China Sea bound for Manila and the Philippine Islands. I had a couple of light-hearted romances going on board, as usual - that always makes a cruise - so it wasn't long before I perked **up** considerably. Who could remain broody for long with Noël around? Besides adventure again was beckoning and I could never resist it.

CHAPTER THIRTY ONE

A few days later we steamed into glorious Manila Bay, which caressed the shore of Luzon Island. The beautiful foreshore holds the imposing Manila Hotel, majestically overlooking the whole heavenly site. The promenade drive along the waterfront was a dream in 1940 - I just hope it still is. Our stay there was shorter than at Japan and China, just two or three days, so we went helter-skelter to see as much as possible.

The Philippines then were under American protectorate and were much ahead of other Asian countries in the availability of amenities such as refrigeration, air-conditioning, neon lights, elevators - for those who could afford them. I was surprised at this and even more so when I arrived in Australia to notice the contrasting lack of these things - I was astounded.

The Philippines were wild and strange; I think they still are - off the usual "package tour" round of today's jet-mobs, the 7083 islands comprising the Archipelago are mostly left to themselves. I've been told there are still some fairly savage tribes on the remoter islands. The people of one island were addicted to the flesh of dogs, which they stuffed with wild rice and ate with gusto.

Except that I'm an animal lover, I'd say, why not? Some of the muck we consume today I'd be terrified to investigate and it certainly isn't going to get better in this century.

It is true the Philippines were under American protectorate, but that isn't the whole story. It was ceded by Spain to the USA in 1898 for twenty million dollars - nobody gave the United States anything for nothing! Sure, everyone talks about how rich she is, but that shouldn't apply to just one country - far too many individuals have far too much individual wealth and I think that rule could be extended to them. In fairly recent years the Philippines wanted independence and the United States, ever generous in these matters, gave it them. I hope they use it wisely.

The first thing I noticed with delight when we stepped ashore, were a lot of little two wheeled carts which were open on all sides, but had a top to ward off a very hot sun. These tops were ringed around with pretty fringes and overlapped in front to further battle the glare. I was astonished at the size of the ponies pulling these carts - they were positively tiny, but all seemed in good condition and I guessed the carts were well-balanced. Manila still is famous for these vehicles, called Jeepneys now. I loved them. Fortunately I took pictures of nearly everything this trip, for soon much of it was to be destroyed by war. The Old Walled City and its famous native quarter are just ruins now, but in 1940 we had marvellous fun shopping there. We watched the Philipinos deftly weaving Panama hats under water. I bought a fascinating hat, unblocked, and encased in a large hollowed out piece of bamboo. It was lighter than a feather and I loved that hat. I had it blocked in Sydney but it was stolen while I was travelling on the railways: It still makes me angry to think of it, but I have the bamboo holder, yet.

Even in the Old Walled City the American influence was apparent; I was delighted and cooled to find I could buy a glass of bulk Coca-Cola with crushed ice. The native quarter was large, colourful and fascinating; we spent several hours there. I'm saddened to think it was completely destroyed by bombs.

I'd become friendly with a fun-loving man aboard ship. He was great company and just my type. Four of us hired a car for the day to travel a much further distance than a jeepney could take us. We'd seen all the fascinating things in Manila and now we were heading for the hills. We'd been told we mustn't miss a very famous bamboo organ in a church which had been built in 1762 at a village some miles from Manila. The village was called Las Pipas and was in the Rizal Province. The weather was perfect for such an outing, but we had a few shocks in store for us. After the progressive atmosphere and appearance of Manila, we found a great contrast in its outskirts where the poor people live. It was a series of falling down ramshackle hunks of tin roofed huts, without water or plumbing and was a depressing and unattractive area, although I've seen as bad and worse areas in other countries. I was gratified, though, to see there were no rickshaws; the tiny ponies seemed happy enough and the jeepneys were certainly more colourful.

Las Pinas was a quaint and pretty village and the church larger than I imagined it to be, being built in the Spanish style with a tree-shaded square in front and a friendly Friar on hand to show us the wondrous bamboo organ. Its construction had been started by one Friar in 1818, with 950 bamboos, and had been completed in 1822. However it had been badly damaged several times by earthquakes and rain. Each time it had been meticulously and lovingly repaired by the Friars and villagers at Las Pinas. It had taken more than one hundred years to produce the organ as it was when we saw it and the lump in my throat wasn't from the mumps.

What happened to that lovely church later I class as a crime. The rooms, or Friar's cells under the church were used as prison cells during the war. Many there were tortured – the cells were flooded with water to bring about an agonising end, and finally the church was razed along with the bamboo organ.

But that glorious day was full of vivid colouring, wildlife and rare beauty and we happily returned to the ship without dreaming of the terrible carnage soon to take place there.

It was late afternoon when we slowly sailed with the sun sinking into a deflated sea – I realise that sounds like a Fitzpatrick travelogue, but then, I love those travelogues and I loved that beautiful peaceful scene. The peace was just a prologue to quite a fantastic sea voyage. We were running late and the captain had set himself a difficult and dangerous task. Ordinarily a ship of our size would have continued in the South China Sea to Singapore through the Java Sea along the top of Australia to the Pacific proper and then down the western seaboard to Sydney. However the war was hotting up and our captain anxiously decided on a hazardous short-cut – what a wonderful adventure it was! The number of seas we travelled – I didn't know they existed – the islands we skirted, reefs we only just missed and the fascination of the real tropics; it was all breathtaking to this romantic.

We had been told that no other ship of our size had previously sailed this route and the charts available at that time left much to doubt and speculation. The captain dosed down on a cot up on the bridge, had his meals sent there and didn't leave it for many days and nights. I was in a euphoric haze of romantic bliss; fortunately – or unfortunately according to one's viewpoint – there was nobody eligible aboard. Those I found interesting were already bespoken, but I enjoyed myself anyway.

Our extraordinary route took us from the South China Sea to Sulu Sea, down the west coast of the other Philippine islands. From there we sailed into the Celebes Sea, also full of islands, and touched the shores of eastern Borneo; we nudged the Banda Sea, spilling into the Arafura Sea, which took us along the rugged coastline of West New Guinea into Torres Strait to Thursday Island. There we all breathed a sigh of relief, the captain most of all, I'm sure. A brief glimpse of him at the end of his ordeal

showed him to be unshaven, a little pale, but triumphant. I wouldn't have missed that trip for the world.

We stood off Thursday Island and some officials boarded the ship; nobody was allowed to go ashore, which was a disappointment as it looked so exciting to me. We weren't given a reason for this ban, but we knew it had something to do with the war. Some charming islanders came out to the ship in their canoes and we exchanged presents, laughed and joked.

On leaving Thursday Island we embarked on another perilous journey for a ship of our tonnage – down the east coast of Australia inside the Great Barrier Reef. I felt a little smug as I'd made this trip before, in 1939, when I'd fallen in love with this huge empty land. Ever one to fall for what was wrong for me I'd done it again, but this time there was to be no escape and I had to stand up and take it on the chin like a punch-drunk prize-fighter. However, that was to come later. My looks were still considered above average and I was only in my early 30s – full of adventure and confidence!

At night I'd sit alone on the boat deck and think back to the good times in Hollywood with pangs of homesickness and nostalgia, but I'd shake it off, telling myself I could always go back and I would, what the hell. But somehow this thought didn't altogether dispel the uneasiness, so I'd deliberately conjure up images of the fun, laughs, good and bad times and the tragedies and scandals. The boat deck was a picture postcard place to dream; a full tropical moon beaming down, flying fish madly leaping in the flashing incandescent wake, the lulling swish of the water lapping by, a gentle trade wind softly steering the torpor while palm fringed islets passed like ships in the night – it was dreamy and I dreamt on.

I knocked loudly at the gate; no answer. I hammered again and a speakeasy-type door slot slid back to reveal two unfriendly eyes, glaring in a pudgy face topped by a police cap.

“What d'you want?” The voice snarled.

“In – let me in!” I shouted.

“Get lost.” Bang slammed the slot.

I hammered again, “Let me in, please Uncle Carl, Mr Laemmle - no, no, I mean L.B. Mayer. ‘Just one more chance’, how clever of you to have written those lyrics, Sam; oh, I’m confused - it’s Jesse Lasky I want, remember? I had a letter to you from New Zealand. Help me please.”

Mr Lasky’s glasses glittered as he glanced vaguely in my direction, then vanished. I pounded again, but again there was no answer. Like Alice, I muttered, “Must be the wrong place.” I looked at the gateway sign - Paramount - of course, it was no use here. Clara is a big star, barred, barred, baaaa - all bad starts with the b - bastard, someday I won’t be one. C is good, Christ, civilised people - won’t name innocent infants bastards. Must hurry, won’t they open the gates? Bang Bang Mr Laemmle, no, Universal is changed, Uncle Carl is gone. MGM is home - Sol! Pound harder, no use. Only the grinning sly eyes with the police cap.

“Not here, sister, go someplace else, ha, ha, ha!”

I hated him and his laugh, I was so tired, I couldn’t bother any more, not worth the worry, worry, worry — Suddenly I sat up in the deck chair. My brow was sweaty and I shivered, oh God what a ghastly nightmare. I felt drained physically and mentally. The moon was down, the night dark and the breeze had turned chilly. I hurried to my bed below, hoping the wretched dream wouldn’t return. It didn’t.

CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

Now I gave my undivided attention to the glories of Australia’s western seaboard. It has to be seen to be believed and as we sailed into the wonderful Sydney Harbour, I realised we’d been at sea for a month and a day. It had been a terrific experience and we’d had an emotional farewell dinner the previous night; high adventure shared had drawn us together.

Even saying goodbye to some of my fellow adventurers had made my eyelids damp.

From the Hotel Australia I booked a train berth for Melbourne. I'd not been south of Sydney previously; the overnight journey took me to Melbourne on November 19. The next day found me berthing at Burnie, Tasmania, early in the morning. I'd taken the overnight ferry across Bass Strait. The *Nairama* was to be the last ferry to cross the strait for some months. Shipping losses to the predatory German submarines in Bass Strait had become alarmingly high and it was considered too dangerous to continue the service. People took to the air instead, but my baggage had been too heavy for flying.

I'd never been to Tasmania before, but landing there invoked the memory of an episode which occurred when I was in Sydney the year before, awaiting embarkation for New Zealand. A seasoned traveller, after procuring accommodation, usually made straight for the General Post Office, which place we venerated, for, being the first port of call, it was amazing whom we'd run into. Once the Postal Institution was the friendliest public service worldwide and I loved it gratefully. Times have changed, though, and I no longer love it and it couldn't care less.

The episode I mentioned happened in Martin Place, which houses the Sydney GPO; an impressively large and solemn funeral procession was in progress - flag-draped casket, mounted police, the whole bit. I didn't have a clue about the recipient of all this official respect. Always friendly and curious I asked a woman whose funeral it was. She moved away without answering. Unabashed I asked a man.

"Where you been, mate? It's good old Joe Lyons, of course."

Unnecessarily, I thought, I explained, "Ah'm just a travelling stranger, calling at the post office, and just who is good old Joe Lyon?"

He fairly cracked up laughing, dug me in the ribs with his elbow, winked, tried to grope me (we were crushed in a crowd)

and said, “The Prime Minister of course. You’re a funny shiela, c’mon have a drink.”

Fortunately my friend rescued me just as my new found acquaintance grabbed at me in earnest. A slight scuffle and he was gone. And that’s how I saw the funeral cortege of the Australian Prime Minister, Mr Joseph Lyon, en route to be buried in Tasmania.

Leaning over the ship’s rail, peering into the chill grey mist on the deck, I looked for familiar faces; there were none. Attending to my baggage, I started down the gangway, wondering why this was so – I’d sent a telegram. Then I saw my friend – the one with whom I’d travelled to Australia the year before. We greeted each other cordially. I knew he was very much in love with me and this saddened me as I couldn’t return his feelings. I liked and respected him greatly but it wasn’t the same. He had been and continued to be a very good and understanding friend. I was to cause him sorrow, but I knew I also gave him happiness he’d never had – perhaps that makes us even.

He drove me to the Show grounds where my mother and her people were camped awaiting show day. I had bought expensive presents for them all, even those with whom I wasn’t very friendly. Like me, my mother never learned about people; we both admitted it when we were old and it was too late.

Any lack of enthusiasm in my family’s greetings had to be my fault; my comings and goings were becoming ridiculously frequent. That may be hard to understand in today’s language with jet travel, but then, with only relatively slow ships it was very different. My folks slapped up a makeshift meal and drinks – there always were drinks. Among those out-door show people life is hectic – “put up” and “pull down” the shows, on the roads for hundreds and even thousands of miles, often stopping for just a few brief hours, napping, nipping and makeshift meals. It was a hard life, but an exciting and active one. Back then in Australia and New Zealand the pub lounge was usually the social centre when the people were not showing. I’m not saying,

naturally, that everybody was rotten drunk all the time, just, for some of us, most of the time. We lived in tents - few had caravans then - and the limited space is difficult for socialising, hence the pub lounge, sometimes called the parlour.

I felt very much a stranger in a strange land, even among my own people and became lonely, lost and bewildered. The war was getting through to us now and uniforms of all kinds dotted the population more and more. After my acceptance back "into the fold" I was given a "shake down" (place to sleep) and so began a time of extremes - ranging from deep despair through to adventurous travel, big money, no money, happy love, no love and unrequited love. But that's life.

I enjoyed Tassie very much although many buildings, bridges and other remains reminded one of the brutal penal settlement it had been. But the island had an old world charm and the countryside was beautiful and fascinating. Gradually the constant squabbling in my mother's outfit, mostly to do with the running of the show, upset me and I made it an excuse to look into the bottom of a glass too much, a little at first, but steadily increasing. Arguments between me and the others became frequent and the gap between us widened daily. There were a few oldtimers I'd known in New Zealand; most were descended from good old circus stock, and so I wasn't entirely alone. I made a couple of friendly acquaintances with whom I remained in touch for a few years, but the problem was that I just didn't understand them nor they me.

In this way I struggled along with the show for a couple of years. Success fluctuated with the weather, the quality of the agricultural and pastoral show, the domestic situation and the other show people. It is conceded world wide that show people are a clannish lot and I think the Australian breed were extremely so. Unlike the New Zealanders' treatment of early Australian show people who came, often to stay, the road was a hard one for us here. Ground space at the Royal Sydney Show was never available to us and without the Sydney show living was

meagre and expenses high, mainly because of the great distances it was necessary to travel in this vast land. But I loved the travelling, excitement and freedom which went with this life. Failure to obtain ground space often forced us to join other shows on a percentage basis; sometimes this was profitable, but more often not because of the number of “splits” necessary. But it was all great experience – spending 1940 and 41 in Tasmania, showing at Carnivals at Christmas and New Year. We moved constantly and must have covered every inch of the small island; I played a little golf and enjoyed some marvellous salmon fishing. We did a few shows with some people named Skuthorpe, who were known throughout the country in horse circles. They worked the showground circuit, running rodeos.

The last show we did in Tasmania was at Launceston and it coincided with the sailing of the first ship to leave the island since my arrival at Burnie. Officials told us we could leave on it at our own risk. Having too much show gear to travel by air, we decided to take the ship. The government had decided to risk the trip in order to transport soldiers and other servicemen to the mainland. Naturally being an Australian ship, black-out conditions applied, as they had on my arrival at Burnie. That had been my first experience of blackout, but by no means my last.

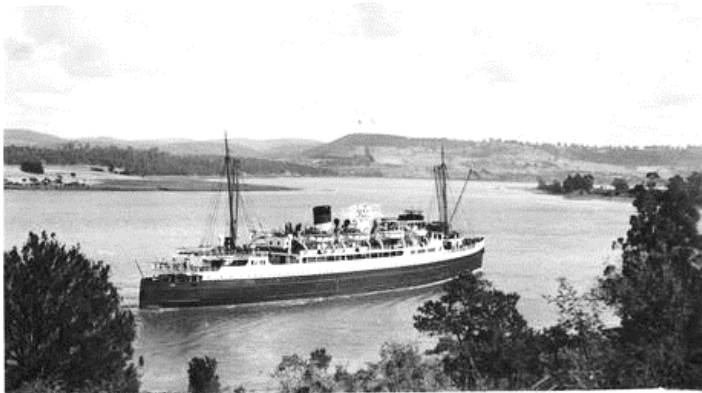
To reach or leave Launceston by ship it is necessary to travel for quite a distance on the Tamar River; it was a pleasant trip and I felt I could have touched the banks on either side they seemed so close. The ship was loaded to the funnels and we were falling all over each other. Soldiers and sailors slept on tables, chairs and the decks, anywhere they could doss down.

Being the person I am, I found all this adventure exciting and stimulating – black-out curtains at every aperture, dim lights all through the ship lent it an eerie atmosphere not unlike a murder movie. The lounge was almost totally dark, leading as it did directly to the promenade deck. Feeling like a cigarette I stepped outside into complete darkness, flopped into a deck chair, put a

cigarette in my mouth and flicked my lighter – then I nearly jumped overboard with fright, as a harsh voice bellowed,

“Put that cigarette out you silly bitch; wanna get us blown to hell?!”

In a frenzy of fright I unwittingly threw everything I had overboard – cigarettes (scarce as hens teeth), good lighter and a candy bar I’d been drooling for. Peering around I saw nobody, but some sensible joker had his beady eye on me. Dejectedly I returned to the lounge and the sound of loud snoring. Some were tired, others drunk and many lost souls such as I just wandered around too frightened to sleep.



THE ROSE, SERIES P.123105
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T. S. TAROONA, TAMAR RIVER, TAS.

This ship, named the *Taroona*, was the first coastal vessel to use Paravanes – a mine cutting contraption attached to the bow of the ship and a hauser-cutting gadget jutting out on either side. It was the night of January 9, 1941; not being heroic, a few of us had fortified ourselves with some good old reliable scotch before boarding and brought the “doings” for later to back it up. We ’uns ended up being quite popular. I, for one, was feeling no pain, but was very sleepy. I’d given up my berth, not because I’m kind-hearted, but claustrophobic, hating tiny enclosed spaces. I

found an empty deck chair and, sans cigarettes, dozed. Then, about midnight, it happened. Crash! Somebody screamed,

“Jesus Christ, we’ve hit a mine!”

More yelling and dim figures rushed past on the deck. I picked myself up, still dazed, but unhurt. I stopped still for a moment to see if the ship was still moving, but I couldn’t tell, so went into the saloon to enquire. We obviously had not hit a mine, but we had bumped into something quite heavily. My enquiries only elicited negative grunts so I gave up and as we were still forging ahead into the darkness, settled down again with the help of a wee drop and joined the snorers.

Berthing next morning the Paravanes were wound in and the mystery partially solved – there was only one Paravane. They guessed the lost one had become entangled in the maze of ship wreckage already so prolific in Bass Strait. The war seemed closer all at once; individually those of us who could even vaguely remember World War I and the “glorious Anzacs” began to experience the uprising of patriotism again.

From the ship we went directly to a carnival being held on St Kilda Beach, Melbourne; the proceeds were to go to the “comfort fund” – an organisation supplying extras and “goodies” for the armed forces. Unfortunately the hope of a roaring success was shattered by a series of electric storms, the likes of which I’d never seen before, but believe me, Australia has them all over every year and they terrify me. Death and destruction often falls down from lightning bolts. Anyhow, it killed the St Kilda carnival, both for the fund and for us.

Communication between the family and myself had not improved, nor were relations between themselves always cordial. I learned that this wasn’t unusual and people frequently left and rejoined the show. My mother owned the “plant”, consisting of a large tent, the vehicles and performing animals. As far as performers went, my brother, Owen was the mainstay of the show, assisted by his wife and a young girl my mother had

adopted years before in New Zealand. Other performers were engaged from time to time.

After the St Kilda fiasco Owen and his wife decided to leave and join one of the leading travelling circuses. Being a renowned and respected performer, Owen could always be assured his services would be snapped up. One couldn't really blame them for going, but it did leave Glory in the lurch; she had always supplied the "plant" and given him free access, but there was more to it than family friction. Other people had a hand in his decision, but I won't elaborate on that.

CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

Finding herself suddenly without acts, my mother incorporated me into the show in a more active role. Having been hypnotised by Glory from babyhood onwards, I'd have jumped from the Eiffel Tower at her suggestion. Despite the frequent deceptions she practised on me throughout the years, I loved her deeply and couldn't see her stuck with nowhere to turn. All she knew of life was that stupid goddam out-door show life; all I liked about it was the travelling, which I knew also was the lure for Mama. So I got stuck into it, doing my best to help out - this type of performing was long out of my system and I found it a bit of a novelty and a challenge now. The not inconsiderable fact that we were desperately short of funds also toed us in the ass. It was taken for granted that I would perform in the show, so I gave in and for a while we did very well.

We showed the small towns of the state of Victoria, which I found fascinating. An avid reader, I knew all about the well known bush rangers - equivalent to the old western outlaw heroes of America - and this had been their territory. We travelled right through Ned Kelly country and I also saw the pitiful grave of Johnny Gilbert; it was unmarked and lay in a field not far from the highway. Both Glory and I adored the countryside and driving hundreds of miles was a joy. The bush

was gorgeous and the beautiful parrots prolific as well as the animals which were well known even overseas. The many venomous reptiles I avoided like the plague. It was a unique and informative experience - as in 1941, outside of its few larger cities, Australia was virtually untouched and very absorbing. True it was a harsh and desolate spot and still is in some inland places. Being lost in the California or Arizona deserts would not overwhelm me, but here I would be afraid, although I think I'd know how to survive, the Aborigines have done so here for centuries. Until it is seen from the air it is hard to realise its vastness and loneliness, but we did know it back then, driving for days on end.

With Easter approaching the Victorian shows were over, so we decided to make the trek to the Sydney Easter show. We belonged to the Showman's Guild - a strong force I do assure you - and naively thought we would be entitled to "have a go" in Sydney, but we were New Zealanders and were thinking on New Zealand standards, where Australian showmen were always given space. The Sydney Show is still the greatest in Australia and people come from overseas for it and the horse racing carnival, but, of course, we didn't get ground space. We had no strings to pull and were not favourites. It was a sad blow for us - we needed that show, badly. Being already on the spot, we decided to take a week off to see this impressive spectacle.

Things really started to fall apart now; Glory decided we'd go north to do the Queensland shows, but I was growing bored and discontented. Owen and his wife decided not to return to our show, so Glory aborted the Queensland tour, deciding on a New Zealand one instead. She soon wished she hadn't; strikes plagued the whole trip and we didn't get to do the show. In Auckland the Civic Theatre manager asked me to do an act before the movie started; at that time it was the largest theatre restaurant in the Southern Hemisphere, so I agreed. I wrote, produced and acted it all, with a little help from Glory's adopted daughter, we did a contortion act. The money all went into

Mama's hands; the whole venture was a ghastly mistake, making me extremely sorry I had not stayed on the ship returning to America. The money I'd handed over to cover "expenses", my salary was poor, relations between us were poor and so was I. The bottle had been my only companion - for short periods I felt warm and forgot my problems, but of course, as the wise know, the bottle is a poor answer.

After sending to a friend for help, I decided to return to Australia; the New Zealand climate was too cold for me and I felt a stranger. I felt more at home over the Tasman for some obscure reason. We all went back, barely on speaking terms. I did feel bitter, but I guess just too many things went wrong. I was met at Sydney by my friend and decided to break away from Glory's show and stay in Sydney. Travelling in show business was not possible anyway, as there was no petrol and some of us started to think about joining the war effort.

Most of the outdoor show people lived in or near Kings Cross when not travelling. It is a famous inner suburb of Sydney, more infamous than nice now, I'm afraid. Glory and her people had separate flats there and so did I. They went their way and I tried to go mine.

Desperately homesick for Hollywood - ships were no longer running and there was no way out; I was stuck here for the duration - lonely and alone, the bottle still my closest companion. Nevertheless I kept enough control to try to work at what I knew best, show business. No stranger to Radio, with my experience in shows as early as 1924, I tried to see people at Sydney radio stations. I never got past the office boys; Sydney radio was a completely closed affair. Serials, which are now replaced by television serials, used the same actors always, as in the television replacements.

Sharing a flat at Potts point with a married Canadian couple, I took to "gag" writing. The husband was in the Army and seldom home, but Madge and I listened to a morning serial featuring Jack Davey in comedy skits. I submitted several pages

of “gags” for the show, but they were returned as unsuitable. A few mornings later when the show began Madge shrieked,

“But Tui! You wrote that; it’s exactly the same as you sent in!”

I just shrugged resignedly, “I know, I know.”

I was to know the same despair and receive the same treatment here many times through the years, but I know I’m not alone in that, nor shall I be the last. I don’t blame Australians for seeking fame and success overseas; so few, and many of them the wrong people, achieve it here – I’ve had a long time to watch the situation. I now realise people didn’t believe I was from Hollywood, although I seldom talked about it anyway. There was mutual lack of understanding between us.⁵²

Sitting for hours in Hyde Park, where I loved to relax, I wrote several songs; they are still under copyright here. Nobody wanted them except for one man doing a patriotic radio program. I’d written a wartime song and sung it on his program as a gesture to the armed forces. It was very well received. The man offered to put his name as composer-writer on the songs and have them published, saying I could have the money. Like the damn fool I was, I declined – always the professional – I wish now I’d let him; what the hell’s the difference.

I arranged a small act and loved doing it for the armed forces’ camp concerts, with people like Gladys Moncrieff, Joy and George Nichols and many other performers. I also did a concert at Parramatta penitentiary which produced an extraordinary experience. The superintendent himself showed us the amazing mystery; outlined clearly on the plain glass window of a small room of one of the prison buildings was the figure of an Aboriginal man lying on a table which had been inside. He had a small beard, it showed up clearly; he also was very dead, having been hanged. The superintendent explained this queer manifestation had taken place years before; while the man had lain there awaiting burial, a fierce electric storm took place and it was claimed lightning struck the glass, or near it, and by some

strange phenomenon, the man's figure was printed on the glass. I couldn't take my eyes off it and found the story and figure weird and chilling. There were some tough customers at Parramatta, but they were one hell of a good audience.

Petrol was completely unobtainable for showbiz tours now, so my relatives had temporarily left the roads, to all our sorrow. Needing funds, I learned to tend bar at Bob Plaistow's pub down on the waterfront, but it was no good. I felt too sorry for all the poor chaps who came for their two or three glasses of plonk (cheap wine), then shuffled off into the night, to sleep God knows where. Communication with some of the other bar-girls was also less than satisfactory. Thinking back I realise they probably thought I was "putting on" a Yankee accent; their sarcasm was explicit and I blew my stack and quit. I never did become a barmaid, but took to spending far too much time in pub lounges, as they're laughingly called.

Lonely and craving the companionship I so badly missed, I'd talk to anyone. Of course I met some "lulus" - nobody suggested otherwise. I had no way of knowing and there was a war on. The following encounter should give a fair picture of the situation. I met a married couple, the husband being, strangely, a sea-man who drank little, however the wife was a lurid lush who got very sloshed with anyone who would buy, whenever her husband was at sea. They were friendly and appeared to like me which was enough recommendation in my lonely state. Liquor was often extremely scarce, except during the five to six o'clock "swill-after-work" hour; of course there was a black market and we all used it.

The woman I've mentioned and her aberrations were to cause me emotional and physical horror and also to conceive a loathing for certain aspects of this country's laws and those enforcing them for many years. Fortunately for me I couldn't see what was to happen. Relatively soon it became apparent the lady used the "drunk tank" with monotonous regularity and she soon made it a habit to send the police to ask me to bail her out.

Feeling sorry for her instead of myself, and having hideous mental pictures of treatment of those behind bars – I do believe I vaguely thought they still used a ball and chain – I’d dash off to the “slammer” and pay her bail. Much later I was to learn it was the police I should have been sorry for. Mail from America was often held up and I’d run short of cash, so I became a customer of a Kings Cross pawnshop; in went the furs, golf clubs or fishing gear, but I always got them out again, however I was never repaid by my, fortunately for me, transient friend.

What follows is most distasteful, also embarrassing and sickening to me, but I think it should be told. In the past and even more so in the present in Australia, rape has been, and is, all too prevalent and lightly dealt with. Why a male or a pack of them, should feel emasculated unless they perform the sex act on an unwilling female is incomprehensible to me, but the fact remains this atrocity is more prevalent here than anywhere else.

The building holding my flat was soundproof, quiet and without a telephone. Although I’d been a tenant for several months I’d made no acquaintances there – seldom seeing anybody day or night. One evening I was at home alone, as usual, when a knock sounded at the door; outside stood a man in a police uniform. He mentioned the name of my “lush” friend and said she was again incarcerated and would I again oblige. I started to say it was late, I was tired and getting sick of being a good scout, when without preamble he pushed past me, saying, “Let’s sit down a minute and talk about it.”

I thought it odd, but I was still unaccustomed to Australian laws, police uniforms and their police procedures in general. If that man wasn’t really a policeman, how did he know the “lady’s” name? I’ll never know for sure. I do know that he slammed the door, locked it, pocketed the key, grabbed me, pushed me onto the bed-sitter and raped me. I yelled once; he put his hand over my mouth, hard, threatening to kill me if I screamed or, indeed, if I ever “talked”.

“Don’t forget, I know who you are and where you are.”

He didn't waste any time and, thank God, was soon gone. I know you've read it all before with dreary regularity, but I was terrified then and am even now, for that was not the only time it happened in this fair land and I can truthfully say that in no way was I responsible, a "pick up", nor did I ever encourage such sordid actions. My crime was simply that I had no one to turn to, no protection and no friends or background here. The police uniform could have been a phoney; I had no way of knowing and certainly was not going to the police with a complaint like that - I still wouldn't. The police have a tough job and I respect and obey them when they do it properly, but on every apple tree there is a rotten one or two. That very definitely ended my friendship with the nice married couple. I also hastily moved far from that flat. I never told my mother when we met later, nor anyone else for that matter. Believe me a woman never feels quite the same again about men.

I did have some bad times and frustration was my middle name, but there were good times too, mixed with some fun; like in a pitch-black black-out, during the war, several of us were invited over to Goat Island, off Balmain in Sydney Harbour. There was some kind of installation over there, I have no idea what. I knew nobody well; one would introduce me to another - instant mateship - there were no Yanks here yet, only me. Everything was fine until grog took control and some of the men lost theirs. We had gone on a small motor boat, which was still moored below. My friends were young engaged couple who drank little and I did likewise. I was inclined to be cunning that way; when things became sticky I was careful. Being mindful there was no instant escape route available made me a little worried too. One way and another the party was getting really out of hand; the young "engageds" were apprehensive and one joker was annoying the hell out of me, so finally having had enough, the couple decided we'd take a row-boat and go home. We slid and stumbled down the hill to the water's edge in complete darkness, but the young chap seemed to know the

ropes as he worked there. After what seemed an eternity in the darkness of the Bay, my newfound friends pointed me in the general direction of Sydney's main drag – we were still in pitch blackness – and said a hasty “goodnight” as they disappeared into a near-by house. I was hopping mad by now for I'd never been to Balmain before, nor since, and it was a long, hilly, scary walk to town and a taxi. When I heard, much later, of Sydney Harbour's plentiful and hungry shark population I nearly peed myself; the risk we took was appalling, but I have to laugh too, in retrospect.

CHAPTER THIRTY FOUR

Australia had a plentiful supply of talent during the war years – troupers of the sort I understand. Most had to learn the trade and many facets of it as I did and also like myself, many had been in the business all their lives and their parents before them. The tent theatres were marvellous, gave great shows and started many careers to stardom. Vaudeville flourished at the Sydney Tivoli; it was the time of great Australian comics, both in circus and on stage. At “the Cross” I met a dear performer named Maud Fanning, who had had a big reputation in the business but was now retired. We often had a yarn about showbusiness along with a “wee drop” – Maud very neat and elegant, lifting her veil daintily. I'd laugh and say,

“One day you're going to forget to lift that veil.”

“Never,” said Maud, and I never saw her do so.

Maud always wore a veil and was very lady-like, unlike me – I'm inclined to be a bit of a swaggie and not a scrap dress conscious. I had enough of that working in movies.

Maud's fame has been carried on by her actress daughter. I've mentioned the fine comic, George Wallace senior; he also had a clever son who did very well on television. Sadly both are gone now. There was also the artist, Stella Lamond. We who met and heard her sing little dreamed she was to give two such

talented daughters to the showbusiness world – first the personality-plus Toni, then the incredible Helen Reddy who is well entrenched overseas, living in America, doing television specials, movies and there’s even a rumour of politics – who knows? All of Australia’s greats had to go overseas for international recognition; this country was so far from the bright lights and large populations necessary for commercialism. Australia can be proud of her “troupe” acclaimed world-wide – starting with the legendary Nellie Melba, Annette Kellerman, Gladys Moncrieff and now followed by a string of fine artists who do her proud even though her prowess in the world of sport is probably better known. What a strange, beautiful, sometimes terrible land it is, but I got hooked.

The richness of talent in the pre and during war years, in my mind, has not been reached since, but I feel the future will be ready for its rebirth. There were just so many marvellous family shows – Barton’s Follies, Sorlies and the fantastic circuses, Wirths, Soles, Ashtons and Perrys. A few of these are still going strong; circus talent here has always been better than in most other countries and kids always love a circus – some pretty big kids too, I kid you not (ouch!).

CHAPTER THIRTY FIVE

All my brothers had joined the various armed forces, here and in New Zealand; all went overseas, two did six long years and one, two and a half. With Pearl Harbour fresh in my mind, bravely I breasted Victoria Barracks in Sydney.

“I want to enlist as an ambulance driver for overseas duty,” I demanded.

News, which was upsetting to me, was trickling through that the USA was having a hell of a time in the Pacific – fighting to the bitter end on Luzon, Corregador, Guadalcanal, Guam, you name it, the Pacific was a blood bath. I had visions of donning plumbers overalls, sliding behind the wheel of a “vehicle of

mercy” and dashing to the rescue of my brothers and sisters in arms, American soldiers and nurses, especially in Guadalcanal where, I was sure, they needed me most. I came to earth with a thud.

“Yes miss, we all want to do our ‘bit’, but I’m afraid it’s not quite as easy as all that.”

“Why not?” I growled.

“Well the driving pool has a long waiting list and we’ve all the women recruits we want. Of course, that’s only for the present,” she hastened to add.

I later found out – just as well it was much later with my temper – that a great number of Sydney and Melbourne society ladies had rushed the recruiting office to join up as drivers. I gathered the main object was to get a chance to drive the officers’ cars. Others fancied themselves in uniforms and wanted to drive ambulances to meet nice doctors. But at that time I didn’t understand.

“Can’t I put my name down?”

“Of course you can, Fill out this form, take the oath of allegiance and if you want to join the WANS you can start training for fitness. Of course, the WANS doesn’t belong to the military, it’s a civilian course, but a good start,” all this in a patronising, sniffing down the nose manner.

To be fair, I guess I didn’t look much like a big butch truck or ambulance driver, but I had driven trucks in New Zealand and bloody well at that – you should have seen the roads, wheeee! My five feet half inch frame and fair blonde complexion was deceiving – I was strong and would have been ideal for the job. What an angel of mercy they passed up!

“Whatdyamean fill out a form, take an oath of allegiance, to whom?”

“Why, the king, of course, who else?” she returned tartly.

“Oh, do you have a king in Australia?” I was blazing mad now and sarcasm was the least she got from me. “I’m an American and if I take the oath I lose my American citizenship, right?”

“That’s right,” smugly.

“How come American men don’t have to take the oath and you take them, gladly?”

“That’s different,”

“How so?”

“We don’t have a precedent for an American woman.”

“Well, bloody well get one,” I yelled, “Sydney Harbour’s full of *Queen Mary*, *Queen Elizabeth*, *Mauritania*, packed to the mast with service people and you quibble like this! No wonder ‘our’ people finally had to ignore your goddam red tape. The Japs would be swarming all over us.” I nearly said “sheeit” but with admirable and unusual self-control I refrained.

She glared at me, but only asked my name and address saying “they’d” let me know about the “precedent”.

“Oh, get stuffed!” I stormed out muttering obscenities which were only partly directed at the offending lady.

Frustrated yet again, I determined to get into the Ambulance Corps, so I joined the WANS, however reluctantly; we drilled and marched by the hour under the ghastly broiling sun, day after day. Only my past stunt and circus training gave me the strength to take it. Many weeks passed without word from Victoria Barracks and I began to despair.

One morning I awoke, sweating horribly and shaking with fever. As usual I was living alone and rarely had visitors, but God takes care of fools and drunks and I’ve been both. Unable to rise, I lay there all day, passing in and out of nightmares of fever; evening came and the sickness continued all night. In the morning I was weaker than ever and barely conscious. Later that day my mother and a friend walked in; there was not much need to be afraid, back then, of leaving doors unlocked and luckily I’d done just that. Vaguely I heard Glory say,

“It’s not drink, I wonder what’s the matter!”

Her friend, sensible soul, said, “I don’t know, but I am ringing a doctor immediately.”

And thank God she did. Glory was not very good with sick people but never gave trouble herself when ill – she was quiet, patient and undemanding, dear little soul. As luck would have it, for a change, a very good doctor came. After the usual examination and questions, he “nosed” around the small, ground-level flat. Opening a door which led immediately onto a side brick laneway, he looked at an open drain and exclaimed, “Aha, mosquitoes. I thought so!”

The two women looked at him in bafflement; I was beyond understanding or caring. He elicited the fact that I was not Australian-born and not long in the country.

“Unless I’ve made a wrong diagnosis, this woman is very ill with Dengue Fever. I’m putting her into hospital at once. That open drain is breeding the mosquitoes and I can see the bites.”

Until then I’d never heard of Dengue Fever and I don’t recommend it. I have no memory of going to the hospital where I remained for several weeks. After my release Glory’s friend, who was from New Zealand, had a nice room in her flat awaiting me and she took care of a very emaciated, hollow-eyed female for some time. I’m forever grateful to Robbie and I hope she reads this. In all it was more than three months before I could do anything but mope and lay about.

Upon recovery I took the first job I could get. The military never did contact me and I dropped the WANS – I haven’t a clue even now what the hell the name means. I said they could “all be damned” and did the war job I am proud of at a small factory in Woolloomooloo, called simply Fireproof Tanks Ltd. In the early days Australia had all of seven or eight warplanes – that’s a slight exaggeration, but not too much – Mirraways and whatever. What she did have were shockingly without adequate protection. Fireproof Tanks Ltd was a small operation employing about fifteen or twenty women. Our job was to patch, with a special process, the bullet and shell-torn tanks of the few planes we had in the northern islands such as New Guinea and also the damaged tanks of the Fairmiles – Australia’s brand of

T-boats. We certainly were kept busy and I often saw dried human blood on the torn tanks when they arrived. I'd never done factory work before, but it wasn't the last time. I am proud to say that my first such job was a tiny drop to help the gallant men and women in the Pacific.

I wasn't alone in this feeling and my workmates and myself tore our hands to pieces to "fireproof" those poor, pathetic gas tanks. For a time I knew that comradeship of belonging and at five o'clock we'd dash to our favourite water-hole and guzzle schooners of beer as fast as our extended bellies would permit until six - one short hour. It was fun, fulfilling (ahem) and above all, helpful. This phase lasted just under a year before I regretfully left, but I still retain my numbered enamel and gilt badge with pride

After my convalescence from Dengue was over I'd joined Glory and her family sharing a lovely large flat right in the heart of King's Cross, but this didn't last long. We never seemed able to share a roof as adults, or communicate, so I obtained quarters alone and worked; it also led to meeting another working woman, whose relatives in Western Australia wanted her to visit them.

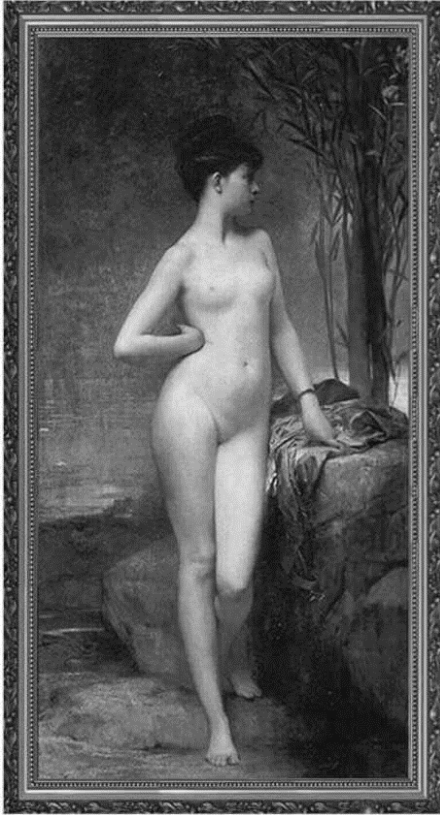
Neither of us having ties, nor had we been West, we became friends - not buddies as I'd been used to, but kind friends. Her relatives ran a pub in Western Australia and, knowing she was an experienced barmaid, had invited her to come and work for them. So far she had resisted, but after an afternoon talking over a few beers, in which I mentioned my discontent with relatives, work, and Sydney in general, she decided to go and take me with her. "Up the lot" - I sure was a sore-head, but little dreamt the trip would lead to my kind of adventure.

I'd recently met up with Bob Dyer, also from the States but unlike me, he did well here. It couldn't have happened to a nicer guy. He had intended to "guest" me on his popular radio show, but before he could, I'd sailed with my adventurous friend on a small coastal vessel, *Marella*, bound for WA. Amusingly the

Marella had been the private yacht of Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm of World War I fame. Apparently the yacht didn't go with his exile. The crew were all Indian and the officers British, all the meals were curried, which I adored and my friend abhorred. Blacked out, but with a sigh of relief, we left Sydney bound for Melbourne and a two day pickup of passengers... or that's what we thought. Two days later we excitedly pulled alongside the wharf in Port Philip Bay - no watersiders were working. With a struggle we managed to "tie up" and remained that way for two weeks, victims of the best-known word in Australia's language, strike! At least we were allowed to live on board and, money not being in plentiful supply, we did, curry and all. By day we explored the city.

I'd frequently heard of the famous French oil painting of "Chloe" ensconced in the public bar of Prince's Pub, a must for all travellers to fair (?) Melbourne - I hasten to add, male travellers! You see, in the early 40s and for many years afterwards, ladies didn't, (and weren't allowed to,) visit public or private bars in Australasian hotels. Oh, heavens to Betsy, no! To my astonishment women hadn't liberated themselves yet, ye Gods! I've been "liberated" since I began living on my own. Some brave ladies in Aussie later went so far as to chain themselves to the Bars, but alas to no avail; Their pious sisters were most scathing of their derring-do, but today they enjoy entry to this male chauvinist domain because of such brave exploits. But at the Prince's Pub back in the forties I preceded my Aussie sisters by barging in through the street door to the crowded public bar, from which wafted sounds consistent with those of an hysterical hen-house. Suddenly you could have heard an atom drop.

My Australian friend stopped timidly at the door, naturally, and the men just stared unbelievably. I stared right back; then, I saw her - Chloe, in all her overrated nudity and beauty. The painting was good, but naughty, as bruited? No. The bartender



Chlöe

recovered from his “Lot’s wife”-like shock. Not one word had been spoken.

“Hey, you can’t come in here!” he gasped.

My sweetest smile, broadest American accent and entrance belied this, “Ooh, I AM sorry. I heard about your famous ‘Chloe’ (no lie) in San Francisco and just had to see her,” I simpered.

Considerably mollified, he turned to his silent motley patrons and quipped, “I suppose we can accommodate the young ladies, being so far from home, eh boys?”

Dead silence. He motioned to my friend to come in. He stood and looked for a few moments; I’d seen deadlier shockers on public walls. About to turn and leave, we heard a typical Ocker voice come from the dead silence with a typical Ocker comment,

“Lovely head of hair, hasn’t she?”

There was a burst of laughter, we laughed too, thanked them and left. I think “Chloe” is still around somewhere.⁵³ I found the experience exhilarating, but only the challenge.

Back at sea we had to skip calling at South Australia as we were too far behind schedule. My mind was busy with other things; we hit the infamous Great Australian Bight with a “heave-ho and no bottle of rum”. Nasty weather from the South Pole bore down on us. The Bight is nasty at the best of times, but between the mountainous seas, smelly narrow ship and endless curries, even I, never seasick in my life, felt a trifle squeamish. Lolling aft, I turned a jaundiced eye upwards – I’d felt us slide down particularly steeply. There above me was a twenty foot wall of water. My lethargy vanished and so did I, screaming “Jesus Christ” and not blasphemously. With insane reasoning I thought I’d feel better dying in my cabin; my friend had been a cot case from the start. I found few Australians were good deep-water sailors – fine in boats, but not too hot in big ships. Perhaps they’ve improved since getting off their butts and going places.

I scrambled into my upper bunk – the seasick friend got preference, naturally – still wishing I’d ridden my bike the three thousand miles, and was just dozing off when “bang” – the damndest noise you ever heard in such a confined space. My friend groaned, turned even greener, faced the wall and muttered, bravely, “Thank God, we’re sinking.”

Not me – I love life. Picking and dusting all the bits of dirty ship’s paint out of my hair and clothing, I scrambled down, bent on braving the twenty-footers to make enquiries. I hadn’t even opened the door, when, crash! The paint left after the first time, settled all over me. I really got moving now. Had we hit whales? Were the Germans or the Japs shelling us? (I’d had enough of that with those bloody midget submarines in Sydney Harbour – and me languishing in hospital with the Dengue; the sound of shrapnel crashing on our roof did nothing to cheer the patients. We who could walk, stumbled down to a shelter and helped the nurses carry those who couldn’t – all this in a black out. The fact that the shrapnel was our own, as was the crossfire, wasn’t funny – our poor home guard couldn’t see what to shoot at. I could think it wryly amusing except I remember a number of boys

living on a ship permanently moored in the harbour, starting as cadet sailors. The torpedo meant for a big War Ship or troop carrier hit and killed most or all of them – what’s to laugh? This scrambled through my brain as I tripped up the narrow gangway to the deck. There I stood and gasped at the ridiculous sight of one lone, forlorn two-inch gun firmly fixed astern, pointing in one direction – aft. Stuttering, I asked what the game was.

“Oh, we’re having gun practice; here, stuff this cotton wool in your ears. You should have done so already.” I spluttered that I’d known nothing about their bloody “play-acting” and also, that he could stuff the cotton wool up his ass; I was livid.

Indignantly, “Madam, there are submarines all about here. We’re going right off course into the Southern Ocean, evasive measures, you know. We must be prepared.”

“What! With that goddam silly little popgun pointing only one way?”

He turned his back on my derision, ambled back to the belching pop gun and threw another “smoke pot” astern for a further pot-shot.

Bemused, I groped my way below and found a comforting bottle – the two of us comforted each other alone at a saloon table. Kaleidoscopic war scenes took on a Gilbert and Sullivan look – the dive bombers at Yokohama, the Matson floodlit ships, black-out ships to Tasmania, Paravanes tangling with sunken wreckage and one, lying in hospital on the bank of Sydney Harbour, caught in our own cross-fire shrapnel, just out of hospital with shells from Japanese mother-subbs falling near me at Rose Bay and now this; a tear of self-pity fell into my beer and I went below to fall into my bunk.

After giving Cape Leeuwin a wide berth, we finally reached Fremantle – as good old Bette Davis would say, “what a dump!” But a short train ride away was the lovely little city of Perth which made up for much of the rough and ready, but adventurous journey. After a couple of sightseeing days in Perth we boarded a train for a smaller town, but bigger dump than Fremantle,

Busselton. The train ride was worse than the “slow boat to China”. The strain of the trip was not helped by the fact that my friend had not seen her brother for years and had never met her in-laws. We all hated each other immediately - the jobs fell through, we fell out and I refused to remain.

Perth certainly looked good again after Busselton. My friend evidently thought as little of her relatives as I did, for she also returned with alacrity. With funds low, accommodation zero and friends nil, we got cracking. I interviewed the American Consul about work and living quarters. For the latter he suggested the most expensive hotel in Perth - that was out, but work, in. I became assistant to the American Petty Officer in charge of a former yacht club on the lovely Swan River. It was being used as a rest and recreation club by the U.S. Submarine CPOs. My boss was a swell guy and we got along fine. As he was out a lot he left me plenty to take care of and I loved it. The boys were great - well, most of them. I worked the cloak-room which gave me the chance to screen their lady friends against a bunch of Police pictures or mug-shots. If any chief brought in a lady who matched one of the pictures, he had to escort her out again. I didn't much like this part.

We had a few problems, an occasional brawl, or a man overboard. His buddies would drag him from the drink and hand me his roll to wring out and plaster around the place to dry, if you please: No, I didn't get rich quick; I never took a cent and strangely enough, received very few tips and bloody little thanks. I think it was because they knew I was American and also had the power to stop their girlfriends from coming in if it was necessary. I didn't really want to; it was no skin of my nose what sort of record the girls had, but I'm a stickler for discipline in its right place and this had to be one of them.

However, without showing it, except by not robbing them, I loved those sub. boys and when they'd straggle silently in, flop dejectedly into chairs, curtly ordering drinks, my heart sank with theirs. I found it difficult to smile and appear carefree, but I saw

to it that the music was gay and bright and the place cheerful. It was, of course, the time of the fantastic big swing bands, which started some of their members on the way to being famous singers later. The job was perfect, starting at five each evening and working until midnight; I could see matinees and go to the fine beaches to swim in the Indian Ocean - a first for me.

One Petty Officer, I recognised immediately; he'd been an intern at the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Hollywood and had treated me there. I started to acknowledge him by name, but he silenced me with a look, handing over his I.D. card - the names didn't jibe. Young, tall, dark and handsome (as Mae West would have it) he simply nodded, looked hard at me again and went his way. I saw him several times and he wasn't attached to the Medical Corps, but he never offered to explain and I didn't ask him or mention it to anyone, until now. I really felt like Mata Hari but I guessed there was a valid reason; he was a nice young man.

I really loved the west, which was just as well as there was no way out for civilians. Trains were booked months ahead and ships weren't running at all now. There was one horrid flaw to this idyll - the "digs" I'd finally scrounged were on the south side of the city; a small double room at astronomical rent and rotten with bed bugs. I'd never seen or felt these delicate little creatures before, or since, thank God. I won't mention the name of the dump as it might still exist, but the owners should have been in jail - or better still, in a concentration camp full of bed bugs; there simply wasn't a reasonably priced place to be found. I didn't feel too clever about my find when the bugs bit and I had to sit all night, awake and huddled in a chair. At dawn we threatened the Landlord, went to the river bank and lay under a tree to snore the day away. On our return a new and clean room was awaiting us, far removed from the other. We dressed and went to work.

It was in Perth that I began to feel ill; I saw a doctor and had x-rays which showed a sluggish gall bladder. Fortunately the

doctor wasn't addicted to butchery and only operated when absolutely necessary. He treated me well and I still retain the gall bladder. Nevertheless I was never to feel completely well again, suffering spasmodic pain which sent me straight to the alcohol, again as a cure-all, an idiocy handed down from generation to generation with us.

Going a few mornings later to collect the x-ray results, I noticed the flags flying at half mast and, in a desultory way, I asked why?

"Oh," a bright young thing exclaimed, "President Roosevelt is dead."

I immediately burst into tears - I loved that man. He was the only President for whom I'd ever voted and I'd still do so. Regardless of what they say about F.D.R., I remember well the tremendous good he did for the poor, the battlers and the down-trodden, which in turn, did good for his (and mine then) country. We couldn't do better today. I stood sobbing, remembering the time he sat almost directly in front of me at the Motion Picture Electrical Parade, the proceeds of which went to charity. While I lived in America we had three Presidents - almost four, because Harding had died in 1923, the year before my "triumphant" arrival - I noted all that came after and to me Roosevelt was the greatest President in the USA ever, including "Honest Abe". Don't worry, I'm in hiding.

By now I was a little homesick for the East and Mum, but I liked my job and felt at home with the American boys, so I kept on. They didn't tip me much, but sure kept me in cartons of cigarettes, which were scarce and much sought after, and in bottles of booze aplenty. I went easy on grog, though, as I couldn't have handled both it and the job. That wardrobe full of smokes and liquor was a great help towards getting us back East.

But then, with little warning to us, the war was over. As everywhere else, Perth went wildly mad. What a feeling of relief and happiness! There seemed no hope of obtaining train transportation until, eventually, someone "wised me up".

“Put a little something in an envelope etc....”

In desperation I did and it worked like magic. Two days later we were entrained and bound for Sydney. It was an enchanting trip right across that lone empty land; with only a couple of stops at sidings, where near naked Aborigines gathered, seemingly from nowhere, shrilly asking for “baccy and money”. They were given both, all of us happily laughing. One was given a handful of pennies – the great big cartwheel ones of the day – and the dark man threw them disgustedly on the ground.

“Don’t want brown money; want white money!”

All he got was stares. It sure was a great train ride; one part, for close to a thousand miles, there is not a single bend in the rail line. I little dreamed then that in less than a year I would return to the west, but by road, over the great Nullabor Plains.

The first train took us to Adelaide in South Australia, where we changed for Melbourne, Victoria. We skipped “Chloe” this time, moving straight on to Sydney and back to Kings Cross for Christmas and New Year.

New Year at The Cross is to Australia what New Year in Times Square, New York City, is to America. With my frequent movings in and out of the Cross, that was the only New Year I spent there – the first one after the war and boy it was a humdinger!

CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

Back in the bosom of my family I found things much the same as usual. Glory had written asking me to return, for now, she wanted to hit the road again. I regaled them with tales of the glories of the west, getting a little carried away, I think, dreaming of how it once was in Hollywood. Glory was impressed anyway and said we’d do a run of shows in the east and then go west in time for the first post-war Perth Show. As usual Glory had acquired a good “plant” – a strong, large, covered Dodge truck bought from the army and a sixty-foot brand new tent.

We did extremely well the first year as people were starving for any kind of entertainment in this part of the world after the years of worry and austerity. Dozens of shows later, dashing through the hinterland of New South Wales and southern Queensland, it was time to start the trek to western Australia - all three thousand miles of it. It was a journey I'll remember forever, realising how fortunate I was to have had the chance.

We left from Brisbane, six of us, and if you look at a map and regress the roads over thirty years, you will have some idea of the undertaking. We made one show stop on the way - a tiny hamlet called Crystal Brook, in South Australia, not far from Port Pirie and far, far, from whence we started. Then we went up Spencer's Gulf to Port Augusta, around and down to the sea, facing that infamous Great Australian Bight. Why we came this roundabout route I'll never know, except that the roads were even worse than today, which many will find hard to believe. But I'm glad we travelled so, for I saw much that I would have missed had we gone direct.

An extraordinary thing happened about five miles west of a dot on the map, called Ceduna, bordering on the Nullabor Plain. We'd tossed a camping tent up to doss down for the night in a lovely spot - a clump of gum trees, a deserted farm house across the road providing water, nothing but fields in sight for miles except for sporadic trees and a long straight tarmac or metal road. After a hasty, but ample meal, we wearily hit the sack. Some were already asleep and I was just beginning to doze, when a thundering noise, sounding like countless horses at a gallop, jerked us all awake. As the noise increased in volume, we lifted the tent wall and waited, watching the road which was bathed in bright moonlight. The sound raced right up to us, drew abreast and passed, dying into the distance - but we saw nothing! Disbelievingly the men walked the few yards to the road but they could only confirm there was not a man or beast in any direction. Too tired to talk long about this phenomenon, we settled down again and, on the word of six people, the same thing happened

again; the thundering hooves returning from whence they had disappeared into the distance. This time we stayed awake long enough to make a cup of tea, listening and watching, but it didn't happen again and we were well on the road by sun up.

The trip across and back over the Nullabor Plain was a fantastic experience, one which wouldn't have been possible had the American army not blazed a good metal road during the war. Previously it had been wellnigh impassable, with pot holes and tree trunks across an almost indiscernible track. It was necessary to travel several hundred miles each day to reach the water holes and we made damn sure we did them; it is still dangerous to be too far away from water in outback Australia. At the water holes we usually threw down some canvas and blankets, staring up at the almost touchable Southern Cross until we fell asleep. God knows how many "creepy crawlies" wandered over us - a new chum is ignorant - but nobody was ever hurt. I wouldn't do it today, for there is a worse danger - from the two-legged "creepy crawlies". We passed close to where the wonderful Daisy Bates spent some time with the Aboriginal tribes.

Perth and a few other Western Australia shows returned good money, but it's a long haul from coast to coast and almost nothing in between, although the return trip was even more exciting. Out in the middle of nowhere we passed a "kook" pushing a wheel barrow across the Nullabor! We'd seen nobody else, so he was completely alone, loaded beyond belief, wheeling the old fashioned conveyance. None of your fancy and easy rubber tyres, just a plain old iron wheel. We stopped and so did he. Jovially we asked his destination. A taciturn "Perth" was all we got. To the query, "where from?" came an equally taciturn "Darwin". We stared bug-eyed. Glory tried to question him and so did I, but he wasn't interested. He sure eyed Glory's diamond rings avidly, though. Happily we were six and withstood his contempt. He allowed us to try to lift and push his barrow; not one of us could. He let me take a picture of him sitting by the roadside. Weeks later we read that an unidentified man had

wheeled a barrow from Darwin to Perth on a bet so small as to be utterly ridiculous. He gave no name and disappeared into the mists of Australian “dreamtime”.

Leaving South Australia we made for the remote Broken Hill, a famous mining town in New South Wales. After a day on the trail we ran into a dust and sand storm only slightly less severe than one I’d encountered in the Mojave Desert in California. I drove the truck now while two men walked ahead to keep me on the invisible tarmac. I could barely discern the men. We eventually got through and had a ball in Broken Hill for a few days. Boy! The people there sure knew how to drink and fight. I felt I was on the back lot of dear old Universal, doing a wild and woolly western.

I don’t know why we made our next insane trek, but I’m sure glad we did, for I saw outback country I would never have seen, especially as it was then. We left Broken Hill for Wilcannia (never heard of it? Neither had I). Glory had heard it was a real “never never” and would be great money territory. Boy, did we have some lessons coming! Wilcannia was at least one hundred and fifty miles away over a broken track. Excitedly we looked for the beautiful Darling River – with that name what would you expect? So did we, ha, ha – it had been drought time. After all the dust and sand in the greenless, waterless three thousand miles, the mental picture of the Darling River ran through our minds like the Amazon. Imagine a trickle of sluggish yellow water, banks bare as a baby’s bottom, but not half so cute, no trees or grass, just baked-hard clay cracks we could have put the truck into. You got it? – well so did we, and we had to camp on it by night. Oh well, a showman’s life is like that.

Practically panting, we hunted all over the map for Wilcannia before realising we were in the middle of it – “it” being a tiny wooden pub with a large piece of hessian for a door. I guess there was a store or two, perhaps even a house, but I don’t remember any. Giving up any idea of showing, dejectedly we trudged through the hessian door. An hour or two or three later, we left

in much better spirits, deciding to camp the night on those lopsided bare banks of the Darling.

The next day, carrying on with true pioneer spirit, aided and abetted slightly by a drop of Dewar's spirit, we departed Wilcannia, gallantly heading for (you guessed it) Bourke. Sure, you've heard of "the back of Bourke" - it's at the back of the Black Stump and any true Australian can tell you where that is. It was at least another one hundred and fifty miles with no roads of any description, not even any defined tracks, so we followed the sun, then the stars, hoping for the best. We also opened and shut about fifty bloody gates. But there were compensations, for me anyway. I actually saw herds of kangaroos moving at lightning speed, huge, beautiful and graceful animals. Most unusual also, were dozens of emus also running swiftly along the fences. We passed countless skeletons of all manner of bush creatures, an occasional live snake, lizards galore and now and then a lone dingo.

Everything was frighteningly beautiful; we really were "back of beyond". Finally we arrived in Bourke, obtained a site and were delighted to be among people again. Christmas was just a week away and funds were low, so we decided to open immediately. Bourke and its people were very good to us and we did well. Many invited us to parties at their lovely cool air-conditioned homes - anyone who hasn't experienced the heat there at Christmas-time would find it hard to believe - whew! We were grateful and happy, especially as they liked our show.

After staying long enough for a Christmas dinner at one of Bourke's pubs, we left for Brisbane on Christmas Day. That dinner was one of our only disappointments - the food was bloody terrible. The Christmas chook was as tough as old boots and we were told the chicken we had just eaten wasn't chicken at all, but galahs, and that's what we felt like for having eaten it... proper galahs. This story is true, grub was always a bit of a problem way outback in Australia - and still is. We had seen thousands of beautiful galahs on our trip to Bourke - I bet you

wouldn't now, nor would you see much of the other lovely fauna we saw.

The haul to Brisbane I'll pass over; it was the longest and least interesting of this zany trek. We played a few small shows in Southern Queensland, but poor attendance meant we did poorly, so we made for Brisbane and disbanded. I rented a small room, Glory and her family, a flat. My health had deteriorated badly, we were edgy because of poor business and bickering – in my case partially because of my declining health. I decided to take my chances and stay on in Brisbane, which was a decidedly quiet town and no place for a person only knowing the showbusiness way of life; no opportunities in the field existed. But I was too ill and tired to give a damn what I did as long as the job paid enough for food and rent and perhaps a few grogs if I felt I couldn't go on. "What fools we mortals be", as the Bard put it.

My folks had taken a job on Norfolk Island in the Pacific, where they stayed for about two years.⁵⁴ Although miserable and lonely, a few factory jobs later found me ensconced in a modest flat, but it was in a "naice" area. I was to remain there for fourteen traumatic years; mostly I managed to work, pushing myself to keep going, often with the dubious aid of liquor, which didn't really help anyway. Finally I visited the Brisbane General Hospital for an overhaul. They said I was run down and suffering from nerves, but couldn't find anything really wrong. I mentioned I was drinking too much and they suggested Alcoholics Anonymous if I had a problem. Problem? Hell, my life had been one long problem! But I went to A.A. and was very fortunate to see the "point" immediately and stopped excessive drinking. At one of the meetings I met a "sister in distress", who became just that – a sister. We've been close buddies, helping each other ever since. For more than twenty years booze has no longer been a problem for either of us – we sure as hell have had plenty of other problems, but a strong friendship has helped to sustain us. I feel extremely lucky in this.

In early February, 1952, I took a break from work to meet Diana Barrymore for a yarn, and, in her case, drinks. She and her current husband were doing a sketch at the run down vaudeville house, Theatre Royal. In Hollywood I had met her Aunt Ethel, Uncle Lionel and father, John - a fact of which I'm proud - what talent! However at this point things were not going well for Diana, mostly due, I'm afraid, to her behaviour. Drink, ever a problem to many actors, was bringing trouble to both Diana and her husband. Their Australian tour was a failure, of course; I liked Diana very much and perfectly understood her problem. I did my best to give her good advice about A.A., but as usual, advice was futile. She didn't take mine, nor I hers, to return to America with her and her husband and enter television. It's just as well I didn't, as I'd never have stood the pressure with my health as it was.

King George VI of England died shortly after this, so the year was off to a mixed-up start, a time which was to spell the beginning of the end of what had been the British Empire, which was a pity after all those years as a great empire.

CHAPTER THIRTY SEVEN

Glory had written telling me of her loneliness on Norfolk Island - a very different place in 1952 from the present. She begged me to come and stay as she needed the company; once more I said yes. She offered to pay my fare back if I could get myself there. I sold one of my remaining two good pieces of jewellery, a twenty-first birthday present, from my step-daughter, Clara Bow, and boarded a "Skymaster" at Sydney Airport. There were no jets then. I took off on a twelve hundred mile, five hour, fascinating journey. Apart from vast expanses of sea and sky we saw nothing but Lord Howe Island below us - a mere dot. Approaching another infinitesimal dot much later, I thought, "Oh, good God no, we'll overshoot right into the sea." We didn't - but we had little ground to spare.

My five month stay on Norfolk Island was far from dull; 1952 was a busy year for me, but daily I grew to feel more ill and hid the fact.

The strange history of the island affected me deeply. I believe “vibrations” of the past infiltrate us more than we realise at the time. There were few people living there who were not related in some way to the *Bounty* mutineers. A charming woman, Mrs Norman Birdsey, nee Elizabeth Christian, who was great grand daughter of Fletcher Christian, entertained my mother and me and fascinated us with her stories and folk lore. I also met an old man in his eighties, who was a great grandson of Matthew Quintal. He told me that only one of the “originals” from Pitcairn Island was still alive on Norfolk, an old lady of ninety-four years. She was a grand daughter of a mutineer. I met her briefly later, but it has been over thirty years, so I guess none of them are left. I also met others connected with Pitcairn Island, Knobbs, McCoys and Adams, all of whom were connected or related to the mutineers. A renowned author and biographer, Dr Jacomb, was there also and I was introduced to him before he left for the New Hebrides and Malta.

Some extremely amusing characters lived locally. One they called “Lantana Lil” - I haven’t the faintest idea why - perhaps she owned all the land on which lantana grew, but it was such a lot. There were no taxes, so good liquor was cheap and consumed with gusto. I’d joined Carrie Nation’s⁵⁵ mob by now, so I missed out on all the goodies, however I did a little hospital visiting - occasionally someone ran amok with potent case of delirium tremens (plain old “horrors” to you).

The good ship *Bounty* had but two small cannon; when the overflow of people left for Norfolk Island they took one and left the other. Both had gone down with the ship in Bounty Bay when the mutineers had burned her, but they later dragged them up the cliffs in case of attack. Walking through tall grass one day, I stumbled on the very scarred, rusted barrel of the *Bounty* gun. On enquiry I was scandalised when I was assured that it was the

remains of the original cannon, now used for drunks to sit on while slurping at their bottle. In my best fish wife manner, I yelled loud and long about the ignorance displayed toward the interest of future generations in such an object. A gentleman running a weekly news pamphlet finally saw the light and had the cannon mounted on a pedestal. I was temporarily mollified, but months later when I'd returned to Australia, Glory wrote to tell me my efforts were in vain. My "antique" had been missed by the drunks, so they flopped it back into the long grass, to plant their lazy backsides on it. I had taken pictures of this historic piece before and after the rescue.

Andrew Carnegie was a grateful man and showed it by endowing libraries world-wide, for all people. I spent quite a bit of time in the one on Norfolk, especially to view the *Bounty* log book, which was there then. I recently heard that most of such material and the cannon had been removed to Canberra. I hope it is true.

The large prison ruins on the island were almost gone, except for a couple of small buildings and the surrounding wall, worn down by time. However Hangman's Gate, as the entrance was called, was quite intact, including the very evident worn dent in the wood where the rope had been flung over for the gruesome "finale". Cement holes in the ground inside, barely high enough to stand in, but not large enough to sit, used as "punishment cells", were evidence of some of the inhumanities of the day. The mass grave outside the hallowed ground of the peaceful cemetery by the sea, had a headstone stating the mutineers of "Bloody Bridge" lay beneath. Driven insane, the prisoners had massacred a hated guard, cementing his remains, piece by piece into the bridge; hence its name. Many of the headstones were immensely intricate, conjuring up images of those other desperate mutineers, for *Bounty* names were everywhere. Liberally sprinkled throughout were headstones bearing the names of poor young prisoners, seldom over twenty seven, "Hanged for — ". The little island was so quiet and peaceful

that all that former violence seemed unthinkable, but it certainly had happened.

There were several lighter moments in my stay. Glory's family and I did acts for the opening of the Norfolk Island Musical and Dramatic Society - a gala affair, although not up to "Oscar" standards. The Easter races were quite amusing, especially as I won money on four out of six races; each race comprised of about four hairy-goats - it was quite a day.

One night we were invited to a party at one of the Island's less opulent homes. They were beautiful, friendly and kindly people and it was a very bright party. not brightly lit, though; there were only candles and lanterns. I sat, for some time in a corner alone, listening to the weird Norfolk jargon and watching the frantic dancing to equally wild music. The elongated shadows on the walls and ceilings mesmerised me and I found myself wandering the shores of Tahiti in the moonlight with dear Johnny, so long ago. Noise notwithstanding, I believe I was almost dozing for sudden quiet brought me alert. People were muzzily farewelling - there appeared to me more folk returning to our place than had left it and as we had only one jeep I was thrust into an auto with a chap who was also coming to our house. I'd met him briefly at the party.

With great hilarity the others left in a cloud of dust. We seemed to be having some difficulty in starting and belatedly I realised my escort was more than a little drunk. The lack of telephones, taxis and street lighting didn't help matters. Then, we were rolling, literally, from side to side. Had we taken a direct course all might have been well, but no, my "friend" had to see a "friend" and zig-zagged up a cliff face that would have paled Sir Hilary. Being told "not to be silly" when I asked to get out and walk didn't add to my peace of mind; a pitch black night and all those bloody pine trees also conspired to upset my equilibrium. Finally we screeched to a halt, teetering on the brink of a precipice. Joe Blow couldn't have cared less. He slurred,

"Be back loon sluv."

I couldn't have moved for a million dollars. With no idea where I was, poor eyesight and danger imminent from all directions, I resorted to the coward's usual hope, prayer.

Joe Blow wasn't long; his lady love, also full in more ways than one, saw him to the gate where they slobbered over each other for a moment, then he literally fell into the car. I shuddered and in a piteous voice asked him to "please take me home", just like any good little seventeen year old used to do fifty years ago.

"Shurrup," snarl, snarl, "bloody nuisance, coulda shtayed."

There followed more vocal abuse best passed over. By this time we were rollicking down the cliff face in thick pine trees. Placatingly I asked where we were.

"Goddam Headstone, don't you know nuthin'."

My dander rose suddenly, "Yes," I howled, "nuthin' is you!"

Then from nerves the tears flowed. Surprised, he slewed the car sideways, there was a jolt and the car stopped. The engine wouldn't start. Muttering, Joe Blow opened the door and put one foot out. About to follow with the rest of him, he stopped; his foot dangled in mid-air.

"Jeez," he gasped, "front wheel is over the edge."

He sobered up considerably. I could hear the waves crashing on the rocks far, far below.

"Oh great, you sure picked a swell place to get us killed - Headstone indeed!" I sneered.

It was true - there was a cairn close by, inscribed with something about a ship wreck; the details escape me. Anyway this place was named Headstone, theirs and, nearly mine. My companion was still pretty drunk, but not enough to try to start the car, or else I wouldn't be here to write about it. The right front wheel was three quarters over the edge. I got out very smartly and he very cautiously slid over to safety.

"I'll have to leave the blasted thing here until daylight," he moaned.

“Oh? How far are we from home? I must get there – they’ll be worried.”

I seriously doubted the worry, but had no intention of facing the “wink, wink, nudge, nudge” bit in the early morning sunlight.

“It’s a two or three mile walk,” he sidled towards me. “We could park under the trees for awhile and have a bit of a nap; we could get the car going later.”

Not bloody likely, I thought, He was sobering up, had apparently quite forgotten his lady friend and his intentions towards me now were distinctly amorous. I thought desperately for a moment,

“Say, Joe, isn’t there some place around here we could get a drink? I sure could use one.”

“Thought you didn’t drink,” he looked at me suspiciously.

“Don’t be silly, I just didn’t feel like it tonight; I love to watch the dancing, but after such a near miss I feel a little shaken.”

Out came the truth – we were only a little over a mile from home and on the way was a speakeasy, yes, even on Norfolk Island. Then, anyway, one could get a drink that way, from his friends, of course.

“Well, let’s go.”

“Okay,” he said, snaking his arm around me, and we stumbled off into the darkness. My mind was racing – he had roaming hands which kept us both busy. I was doubly busy, half-holding him up as he was still far from sober. I chattered incessantly, asking dozens of questions, anything to keep his mind off his obvious advances. As we struggled along our only light was the exquisite glow from the phosphorus on the mushrooms or toadstools growing among the pine needles under the Norfolk Pines. The sight was so breathtaking I almost forgot my plight. I had heard of, but not seen, this beauty before. In the hope of stopping his annoying advances, I waxed lyrical about them, to distract him – his answer was predictable.

“Fuck the mushrooms, or better, why don’t we?”

Threatening dire revenge, I stopped his game of scrabble; he sulked, but staggered one short way before stopping at the gate of a small cottage. Footsore and weary, I leaned against the post

“You can wait here. I’ll getta ‘hic’ bottle; we’ll have a nice li’l snort near the air fi - ‘hic’ field there.”

I peered into the darkness and my heart gave a thump. Dimly I could make out the field and all at once I knew my way home. Nudging him toward the gate, I whispered, “Oh goodie, you get the bottle and I’ll wait here.”

Under the cover of the loud door-knocking and yelling, I took off through the hedge, across the airstrip and into home and safety. Loud snores greeted me there - too tired to be disgusted I went to bed and mine soon joined in.

CHAPTER THIRTY EIGHT

To me, April twenty-fifth will always be the most important day in Australasia; it is Anzac Day. I’ve attended two lonely little ceremonies in places as far apart as they could be, one was on Norfolk and the other even more remote, a whistle-stop at the back of Bourke, in Australia. Both moved me deeply. The depth of this feeling grows yearly, as I observe the diminishing numbers. The service at St. John’s Anglican Church on Norfolk was short, silent and touching. Patriotic Glory whose three sons had served long and well, became rather emotional which caused a slight drama in the family, but all ended “merrily” between them. The island also had a rare visit from a Catholic priest, who said a mass. He stayed with a family there and they mainly accepted responsibility for his visits.

Norfolk Island’s weather that year was distinctly unpredictable and drama concerning air travel was usual rather than the exception. DC3s from New Zealand and the Skymaster from Australia came each week and during a good period one ship arrived each month. The ship, the *Malaite*, brought freight and an occasional passenger, but the islanders depended on the

ship for food supplies. I should have known that while I was there all hell would break loose – there was a famine. It was genuine and unpleasant and the food shortage lasted at least seven weeks – no bread, flour, butter or other essentials.

The *Malaita* from Sydney was delayed – we have very independent wharfies, but we love 'em. Then the ship called at Lord Howe island first, liked it there so got itself stuck fast on a reef. Planes from both Australia and New Zealand were severely curtailed by a petrol strike in America, which country at that time supplied all our petroleum needs. There was no Skymaster for a month and New Zealand refused to bring freight on some excuse. Divers were flown to Lord Howe Island and found the damage to the *Malaita* was very extensive so workmen had to be brought in from New South Wales.

But there were compensations – never before, or since, have I tasted such glorious citrus fruit as that which grew on Norfolk Island – wait for it – wild. It was there waiting to be picked and eaten at will, in gullies, by roadsides, in paddocks, it seemed to be everywhere and the size and quality was incredible. The same applied to berries and delicious red and yellow guavas. I've always loved fishing and the sea swarmed with the best. My little nieces and I had a rollicking time on these excursions. I'm a great scrounger so we didn't do too badly and my buddie sent a couple of food parcels from Brisbane, bless her.

Finally the ship made it and with great excitement we plunged down to Cascade to watch her unload. The good ship kept it up all night and so did we; anything was a good excuse for a party and what better one than this?

The time had come for me to leave so I awaited the arrival of the next Skymaster. It arrived late in a rapidly worsening storm. Next day flight was impossible. Four days the storm raged while I practically sat on my luggage. Finally, on the fifth day the sun showed, it stopped raining, but a gale still blew. We left at about two p.m. and ye Gods, what a flight! – strapped to our seats all the way because of turbulence. We'd run into the tail end of

a cyclone and it was ghastly. A very sick lady was aboard, bound for a Sydney hospital. She was on a stretcher tied to two seats and unable to sit up. She had cancer and I heard later that she died. The flight took close to six hours – I clung desperately to the arms of my seat and felt awful; I can imagine her suffering. I was to remember with even more pity a few years later.

It was raining hard in Sydney, but oh, what a beautiful sight were those rain-swept lights as we touched down at Mascot. I could still picture my mother's face as she stood watching me leave on that plane. She didn't wave back and, as always, my heart broke when I left her.

In Brisbane failing health precluded my returning to factory work; I was just too weak. I wanted to live in Sydney but let my friend talk me out of that (unfortunately I've often thought). Kismet? I now believe so. Luckily I'd managed to hang onto my flat while I was away – accommodation was bad even then and it's a damn sight worse now. I felt more content, useful and needed when I obtained a job with a well known charity. It wasn't easy – more or less door-to-door begging – the pay was low but my title of Field Officer amused me and the cause was worthy. I often encountered people who had need to unburden themselves and I was glad to listen and help when I could.

There were days I had to drive myself out, leaving home early and travelling long distances by suburban trains and street cars, being out doors helped a lot; it was more in keeping with my lifestyle. I struggled along this way for nearly five years, often too ill to work and taking a rest day here and there. My boss and his wife were kind and understanding, they've done good work for a long time for many underprivileged in this city.

Suddenly, one night the crunch came. Excruciating abdominal pain awakened me at about two in the morning. Without a telephone I was unable to call a doctor; I couldn't move, just bit my blanket to keep from yelling from unbearable colic like pain lasting till about five, gradually easing until I fell into a fitful doze. When awakened by the alarm at seven, I was

tired, sore and worried. Staggering up, I made a cup of tea before taking to the roads again. Two p.m. saw me home in bed completely exhausted. This pattern continued for the next few weeks, but the pain worsened. The job entailed a few strains and stresses usual in such work as well as climbing millions of stairs, this was fast becoming impossible for me. Several doctors at the good General Hospital I visited were no closer to finding the cause of my illness. The pain usually came in the small hours of the morning, which left me to face the day without sleep.

It was now 1957, but on return from Norfolk Island after Christmas in 1952, two lumps had appeared in my left leg; one grew quite large over a period of seven or eight months. They were judged by the doctors to be sebaceous cysts and I stayed in hospital for three days to have them incised. A letter from the hospital requested I return as the “cysts” were more serious than at first thought. For six months I was thoroughly examined each fortnight, but nothing was found so I was let off the hook. They didn’t tell me what they were searching for and it never entered my head that it could be what it turned out - eventually.

But when 1957 came, and with it these awful attacks, my suspicions were aroused. I had an excellent G.P., whose investigations beat those of the Specialists I’d visited and he sent me back to the General Hospital where, in the public ward, an Honorary Specialist visited me. He was a great man in more ways than one - again Kismet? You’d better believe it.

The ward I was in was fantastic - the nursing sisters were incomparable and extremely efficient, the nurses above reproach. We had Queensland’s Nurse of the Year 1957 in our ward and were extremely proud of her, a lovely young woman, clever and kind. The doctors also were splendid and on the job. Times do change - shame.

After much testing and investigation, the brilliant Honorary Specialist sat on the side of my bed and informed me that they “knew there was some trouble, but just couldn’t place it”. He asked if I’d agree to an exploratory operation. Thinking of the

nights of agony I'd endured for so long, I assured the dear man I'd consent to anything that might relieve the condition.

"Good," he said, "we'll operate tomorrow."

I'd never had major surgery that I could remember - it was October and I'd be fifty-two in a few weeks. That night, during the preparation, I laughed and joked with the nurses, feeling no real anxiety. My main hope was that the cut wouldn't be too long. Ignorance is bliss, I guess! as I envisaged something like an appendix scar, maybe three inches long.

Next morning to the sound of such witticisms as "see ya later Alligator" and "Don't give up the ship" and "If it's a boy save him for me", I was trundled up to the floor, where it could well be life or death. I opened my eyes somewhere about midnight and met the clear, sympathetic gaze of the little night nurse. She mopped my clammy brow and whispered, "Oh, dear, you have been so very sick; and so good."

I'll never forget her kind voice and those words. She quietly and gently changed the intravenous drip and hovered around, but I passed out again almost immediately. The next day I was vaguely aware of tubes in my nostrils and, indeed, they seemed to be in every available opening - what a mess I must have looked.

They let my buddy in and she told me she had been in late the previous day and had spoken to me - I grinned and called her by name. It must have been a grim sort of grin the way I looked. One of my mother's relatives also came, took one look at me and took off fast, saying I wouldn't last the night. Later I found this was nearly so, but due to the perfect care at that hospital, within a week I was as cheeky as ever. However the cut was far from minute, I was aghast as I viewed the acres of cotton wool, adhesive tape and the split - from stem to stern

"Ah, well," I thought "I'm alive thank God, and that's all that matters."

Doctors and nurses all skilfully evaded answering my queries about the cause of all this activity.

“We’ll go into all that later when all the tests have been made.”

I wasn’t as completely fooled as they thought; my earlier suspicions were even stronger now, but having been told the operation was a success I happily grew stronger and felt fine - even jubilant. “I’ve beaten it, I’ve beaten it”, I thought, but I kept the thoughts to myself.

Saturday of the following week was my birthday. Everybody knew and staff and patients gaily offered their best wishes. I felt fine. My friend arrived about ten a.m. laden with parcels. I was surprised at the early visit but guessed an exception had been made for the occasion; I was only partly right. With the presents opened and lovely birthday cake uncovered, I turned gratefully to my friend, then stopped.

“Why dear, there are tears in your eyes, on my birthday?” I smilingly said.

Then she really sobbed, “Oh, Tui, you have to have another operation. They asked me to tell you.”

“Oh no,” I gasped. “I won’t go through it again. Oh God, no!”

Tears flowed from us both now, we were left to ourselves until I pulled myself together, then the Sister came in saying doctor was coming to see me. My friend left also saying she’d return later and we’d cut the cake. It was a damp farewell.

The handsome young intern looked down at me; he seemed slightly embarrassed. I’d demanded an explanation, but he hedged, saying, “We’ve been through a lot together, Tui. You’ve been a great patient. There are just a few bits and pieces to tie up - you’ll be fine.” He smiled weakly.

“Doc, thank you, but you’re a poor liar. I know - cancer. Now the truth, how long?”

Nine months.”

BUT!

MOURNING ENDS....

CONTINUING

Oh mourning ended for sure; “nine months” have lengthened into well over twenty years. “You don’t believe in miracles?” Well each new day is a continuing part of mine; life, far from fading has become larger and infinitely more precious. The sun is brighter, sea and sky blue, I really SEE a flower and know the unselfish love for a pet. I love Mother Earth as I never thought I could love anything. Above all I know only God can make a tree. “Drivel” you say? if you ever got the death sentence and love life as do I, you’ll feel as I do.

Of course I’ve had bad times – many, who doesn’t in over twenty years, but one finds the strength if one really wants to and I did, by crikey I did want. Poor health continued until recent times, often dangerously so, but that magnificent Surgeon at the then General Hospital opted for a second operation thereby saving my life and astonishing himself and all concerned. He is still with us, each year I contact him, God bless him. I’ve had much serenity and happiness also, conversely, some great sorrows. Glory’s “passing” the hardest, followed by the loss of one dear niece and my two beloved brothers Owen then Clyde. I never dreamed I’d outlive them all, the shock still stuns me. Gone too, so many beloved friends and work mates of Hollywood movie days, gathered doubtless on some fantastic “Sound-stage” in the sky awaiting “Calls”? perhaps. I send greetings to all, Clara, Coop., Richard, Jean, Joan – the stream is endless but, isn’t that what it’s all about, through one door into another time and space? so why worry. Somewhere surely we’ll all learn the real evils of war, greed, cruelty, hate, intolerance and fear; until then we’ve little hope. We have to care about each other - everywhere.

Well, there really is enough for another book bound up in the last quarter century but I think we’ve had enough you and I so I’ll try to hand you a somewhat ironic smile. Out of the blue completely, two years ago, I was asked if I’d “interview” for a part in an Australian movie called *The Irishman*. Amazed, intrigued

and feeling well, I said “why not?” and did go. The clever and esteemed Donald Crombie was the Director who interviewed me, all done in consideration and good taste which I later learned was the modus operandi of he and his Producer at the time the charming Tony Buckley whom I later met.

Without any fuss we read a few lines and I left. Donald is a gentle, quiet but very firm young man - we had little conversation; also I’m sure he’d never heard of me in his life, after all the years of illness, who had! I smiled as I left the building thinking it was fun but that’s that. Two days later I had a ’phone call from Sydney (I still live in Brisbane) and gulped hard as I was informed I had the part of Granny Doolan in the forthcoming production of *The Irishman* from the novel of Elizabeth O’Connor. I was knocked out, unbelieving. The experience one of the most “touching” of my life due mainly to Donald and Tony, I love you two fellas. Had little to do with most of the Cast, they were experienced actors from many parts of Australia, but the dear old chap playing my movie husband, Andrew McGuire, I liked immensely, sadly he was frail and has “gone” now, so long ole buddy. I’d also like to state here that I’ve never worked with a better “crew” anywhere, Hollywood or otherwise, Australian such I find superb. Weaknesses appear mainly in editing, scripts, casting and production. Afraid that covers a lot, but what’s one old Thespian of over sixty years’ experience worth? anyway, who cares!!!

We had great times on Promotional tours, rushing per jets, from one end of Australia to the other, I found it fun. The picture was well received tho’ Australians have this “thing” about rubbishing their own product and people - unfortunately. I believe the film went well overseas, I deeply hope so for my “two boys” sake. To my absolute and truthful amazement I was nominated for best supporting actress Sammy Award of 1978. Didn’t expect to get it and didn’t, but even being in the final three selection was nice, thanks to those responsible.



Tui Lorraine Bow as the demented Granny Doolan in *The Irishman* (1978)

Parts for Character women of my age “ain’t” plentiful as us’ns know only too well, but another has come my way this year, (two years after Granny and not in her street), which I must mention if only to say “I don’t bloody well believe it happened”, also to let you know what anyone can do if they are willing to make up their mind. The human body can take a helluva bouncing around. The Call came from Sydney again, bless ’em, a small part with Ricky Schroeder, (a recent hit overseas) and the American actor William Holden. I would do it, and did.

Unfortunately I didn’t realize Casting was being done far in advance, also due to “Strikes” an Australian speciality as they’d

say, communication between states was very dicey, mail very slow, telephones likewise, but we eventually got all the “thing” settled. So far as I know the film is called *The Earthling* but - quién sabe? as it’s not finished yet, but just to show you that old ladies of over seventy can still have adventure, excitement and fun I’m telling you this. In five short days this old gal had two jet plane trips covering approximately six hundred miles each way, travelled hundreds of miles in a mini bus, taking six hours, over some roads? you wouldn’t believe, arriving at nine p.m., destination still unknown to me and bleary eyed; as were a few others with me - all younger I might add - also more vocal but nice; plonked down at the back of nowhere, in a newly formed Caravan City, beautifully fed and left to our own devices BUT, be ready to work at six a.m. Three days solid work from dawn till dusk, then a similar return trip, except we hedge-hopped in a twin-engine prop ’plane, part way, to catch the Sydney jet back to Brisbane, I did anyway.

Now, if you good folk think this is a complaint, bloody well forget it, to my horror I find that smelly, fascinating, irritating but life giving to me, film emulsion is coursing thru my blood stream strongly as ever, I’m just “Motion Pictures” even if my face is only on the cutting room floor. Never, ever, give up.⁵⁶

EXIT HERE.

TUI LORRAINE BOW

OCT. 22ND. 1979.

NOTES

1 The newspaper *NZ Truth* (4 January 1908) interviewed Frances Leigh's (Glory's) first husband, Edward Leigh about Valetta: "Leigh says that on one occasion his wife, while in a rage, caught the child by the legs AND BANGED ITS HEAD on the window sill. How the child lived is a mystery. When a doctor examined the child, Mrs Leigh, according to her husband, told the medical man that Mrs Jones let the child fall. After Leigh had got into trouble Mrs Leigh accused her husband of having hit the child with a bottle. Mrs Jones... gives a sad and shocking account of Mrs Leigh's treatment of the child Violet or Velett, or whatever its name is. The baby was sadly neglected. It was covered in filthy rags. It was bruised about the body. On one occasion the child was in convulsions and Mrs Jones took it from her and noticed a huge swelling on the side of its head. Mrs Leigh said the child had slipped from her hands and had struck its head on the window. This poor woman was afraid that the helpless infant would be killed and Dr. Carberry was sent for, and to the doctor, accounting for the injury to the child, Mrs Leigh declared that Mrs Jones' daughter had dropped the child and that it had struck its head on the bed-post." Clearly Glory inflicted permanent brain damage on Valetta, who, with Tui lived with Glory's mother. The next child, "Jackie" (Edward Leigh) was in a "home".

2 Harry Cahill's story has been told in John Foley 2005. *Queensland Harry*. Self-published. Foley corresponded with Tui.

3 In 1918 Harry was charged with failing to enrol in the NZ Expeditionary Force Reserve, claiming that as a fullblooded Australian aboriginal (who could neither read nor write) he was exempt; the magistrate didn't agree. Harry appealed, The *Christchurch Sun* reporting (5 October 1918),

"Early Australian history was revived by Harry Cahill, a Queensland aboriginal, who is now employed as a teamster at Bankside when he appeared before the Second Canterbury Military Service Board this morning. Mr A. J. Malley came forward to claim exemption for

Cahill on account of his birth; but the chairman of the board (Mr H. W. Bishop) would not hear of it, emphasising that there was no section of the Act providing such exemption. Then the native himself was questioned. It appeared that he had previously enlisted and been rejected, but he now objected to service, on the ground that his race had not always received the best of treatment from the whites. Right up to the time of the Boer war, when the Government stepped in with protection, the Queensland blacks had just been shot down, and he himself had had a relative fall a victim to the white men's guns. Now he was asked to fight for those whites. The chairman declared that he knew all about Queensland, but he still considered that Cahill, after six years in the Dominion (he had come over with a circus) should be ready to do his duty. The appeal was accordingly dismissed, with short leave."

4 Little Gladys Vincent, the "accomplished child violinist" had been engaged but must have become suddenly unavailable and 15 year old Tui deputised. The references to her career in Australia were just showbiz hype.

5 In April 1921 Tui Cahill of Sydenham, Christchurch, "also competed" in the Christchurch Literary and Musical Competitions in the "Recitation, Girls, 12 years and under 16. *Break, Break, Break* (Tennyson)". She also "also competed" in the "SONG FOR GIRLS, under 16. Own Selection". (Christchurch *Press* 9 & 12 April 1921).

6 Perhaps the event was not entirely successful: "There was a very large crowd, numbering in the neighbourhood of 10,000. There was dissatisfaction at the outset, on account, it is said, of the prices being higher than expected, and this, coupled with subsequent happenings, resulted in the crowd giving the "wild" portion of the performance and causing the cowboys to seek police protection." (*Ashburton Guardian* 28 December 1921).

7 What Glory (aka Frances Leigh) didn't tell Tui was that she had accused her then lover (almost certainly Tui's father), jockey Edward Murtagh of slashing Tui's leg. The "sensational case" went to trial and the jury found Murtagh guilty, despite his protestation that the "bitch fiend" had done it. He was imprisoned. The NZ

Truth, the country's most colourful and controversial newspaper, with its "mix of radical politics and muck-raking", campaigned on his behalf and in a series of articles headlined MURTAGH'S MISERY, emphasised Glory's child abuse, prostitution, lies and general dishonesty. The case eventually went before Cabinet in January 1908: Cabinet decided to allow the sentence of the Court to take its course.

J Foley quoted Harry Cahill's daughter Kathleen Naiteary, who wrote to him, "Frances was a survivor, very talented, very, very attached to her children and very mindful of her responsibilities, very musical, loved vaudeville and the quick money. A very, very, very genteel lady who acted and carried herself with great style and panache." (Foley J 2005. *Queensland Harry*. Appendix 6.)

8 Both Tui and Owen Lorraine were trained as contortionists from an early age. Contortion was thought to be possible only by those with the familial genetic Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, but most performing contortionists do not suffer from that tissue fragility. Hypermobility may be familial: family members often refer to those who have inherited "the bendy gene". One trainer of young people suggests that 25% of the population have the ability if training is started early. On the other hand training should not start too early because strength, body awareness and control must be taught along with flexibility. "Traditional" methods can cause damage. (<http://www.jimpflex.com.au/otherlife/contortion/scienceofcontortion.html>.)

9 *Horowhenua Chronicle* 25 January 1923. Back in her birthplace, Hawera in November 1923 Tui took top billing: "QUEENSLAND HARRY will be on your Show Grounds on show days. THE BIG SHOW. CIRCUS, BUCKJUMPING, VAUDEVILLE, headed by that Clever Young Artist, MISS TUI LORRAINE, Wire Walker, Contortionist, Song and Dance Artist and Hawaiian Entertainer" (*Hawera and Normanby Star* 12 November 1923).

This then was the life of Tui Lorraine: born to a sexually indiscriminate but musically well educated Irish Catholic mother, physically abused as an infant, raised by her grandmother till puberty, then settling into a circus family with a drunken, violent

but highly talented Australian, and, along with her brothers, learning to sing, dance, play the guitar, walk the tight wire and perform as a contortionist. It was often a life on the road, in tents, trucks and caravans, but with settled spells of domesticity on sheep stations or in the city. They were well off: Harry was a much admired showman and made good money. Glory managed the takings and was able to provide £1000 to set up their circus. She was a performer, an entertainer, a competitor.

After Tui left, into her niche on the 1925–1929 NZ show circuit slipped one “Baby Olar, the World’s Wonder Child, 12 Years of Age, The Wonder of the Silver Wire, Jazzing, Skipping and Dancing in Mid-air, the Marvel of the Flying Trapeze, Featuring the Slide for Life, the World’s Greatest Contortionist, the Only Artist of her Age Performing these Dangerous Feats, And her Troupe of 12 Performing Dogs.... Passing through, on her way back to Hollywood, and sister of Tui Lorraine, famous Universal Film Star.” Perhaps this was the “young girl my mother had adopted” (Ch.32).

10 “Colourful”? the sexual abuse of young women by powerful Hollywood men has rightly been condemned with the “Me too” movement.

11 Curious that Tui should recommend Brownlow’s book which didn’t even mention Clara Bow – a rather glaring omission.

12 *The Great Circus Mystery* (1924–25). A Universal Pictures circus drama in 15 chapters directed by Jay Marchant. Tui’s name is misspelt “Tul Lorraine” in some of the publicity material and now in several online references. The studio had intended the serial to be called *The Leopard’s Lair*; its *Universal Weekly* advertised, “Among the importations is Tui Lorraine, who hails from Australia (“Oh, God, I thought. Here we go again!” Tui might have retorted). She does a thrilling motorcycle ride in a huge gilded ball” (*Universal Weekly* 25 October 1924). Considered lost.

13 The film is *Half a Man* (1925). A naïve and shy young man (Stan Laurel) finds himself alone on an island inhabited by voracious women. Directors: Joe Rock, Harry Sweet. Writer: Tay Garnett

(titles). Stars: Stan Laurel, Tui Lorraine (uncredited: as one of the women), Julie Leonard. See it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yvOYUEcq5w> . This must have been the inspiration for the final scenes in the Benny Hill Show where women chase Hill to the tune of *Yakety Sax*.



From *Half a man*: identified as Tui Lorraine, but is it?



The women in "Half a Man" – one of them is Tui.

14 *The Love Fighter* (1926). George Larkin, William Hayes and Fearless the Dog defeat a German army. They then take French leave with a couple of French farm girls (Tui is one). Armistice disturbs their bucolic bliss and they head back to the US. The girls try to follow them, but a Russian spy and her gang interfere. Director: Lou Carter. Writers: Clarence Locan (titles), Charlie Saxton (story). Cast: Fearless the Dog (Fearless), George Larkin (Sgt. Jack Harding), Florence Ulrich (Yvonne Vincente), Burton Rupp (Captain Erich von Holtz), William T. Hayes (Danny Martin), Tui Lorraine (Fifi Vincente), Sylvia Nadina (Olga Karnovsky). Second release in the "Fearless, the Dog Detective" series. Available on Grapevine video: <https://www.amazon.com/Fearless-Police-1926-1927-Dick-Hatton/dp/B00YQFYUGA>.

A Dumb Romeo (1926). Fearless is in love with Trixie, the dog belonging to the criminal couple (Tui is Daisy, the wife) next door. Daisy steals a string of pearls, escapes by walking between buildings on a clothesline and the crooks drive off, Daisy with the pearls. (Meantime Fearless has saved a little girl from drowning in her bath). A car chase ensues and the crooks' car crashes and burns. Daisy is thrown out and Fearless and his master rescue her, recover the pearls and restore them to their owner. Fearless (the "dumb romeo") and Trixie are reunited and settle into canine domesticity. Director: Frank S. Mattison. Cast: Fearless the Dog (Fearless), Jack Mower (Jack Sherlock), Grace Cunard (Carolyn Van Colten), Bruce Gordon (Tim Connors), Tui Lorraine (Daisy Connors), Trixie the Dog (Trixie). Fifth release in the "Fearless, the Dog Detective" series. Available on Grapevine video: <https://www.amazon.com/Fearless-Police-1926-1927-Dick-Hatton/dp/B00YQFYUGA>.

15 *Diamond Handcuffs* (1928) an American drama silent film directed by John P. McCarthy and written by Joseph Farnham, Willis Goldbeck and Bradley King. The film stars Eleanor Boardman, Lawrence Gray, Sam Hardy, Gwen Lee and Lena Malena. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

16 *Sunshine of Paradise Alley* (1927). A wealthy banker wants to tear down a tenement slum to build a factory, but a charming girl who lives there begins to persuade him to change his mind. A crooked bank employee and one of the tenement dwellers are stealing bonds from the bank. When they are about to be caught, they try to frame the girl and her boyfriend, and the bank employee attempts to force himself on the girl. All comes right in the end, and the banker decides to build new apartments for the tenement dwellers instead of a factory. Director: Jack Nelson. Written by Josephine Quirk, George W. Ryer, Denman Thompson, Rick Todd. Cast: Barbara Bedford, Kenneth MacDonald, Max Davidson. Tui Lorraine as Queenie May. See it at <https://www.loc.gov/item/mbrs02197605/>.

“Tui Lorraine, a former circus and vaudeville star, has an important role in the production,” said *Moving Picture World*; *Motion Picture News* reported (inaccurately on several counts),

TUI OF THE ANZACS

EUROPE has given its full quota of actors, actresses, directors and other artists to the screen. Even the Orient is well represented in the ranks of Hollywood workers. But the Antipodes have been sadly lacking in the emissaries to the home of motion picture production.

It remained for Tui Lorraine, hailing from that distant, charmed land of New Zealand, to start the influx of Anzac folk. Tui, who is now at work in “*Sunshine of Paradise Alley*,” at Chadwick studios, is not the first screen player from “down under,” but she is one of the few, and the only one from New Zealand.

Though a very young person, Tui has had much of theatrical experience. As a circus tight-rope walker, she has visited practically every country on the face of the earth. She visited Hollywood recently on a vaudeville tour, and decided to remain to seek her fortune in motion pictures.

“In this production,” the *Waikato Times* and other NZ papers told their readers, “she is called upon to perform on a clothes line, well above the spectacular New York street scene”. (30 Nov. 1927).



Queenie (Tui) and Sunshine O'Dea (Barbara Bedford).



Tui with one of the child actors in *Sunshine of Paradise Alley*.



Tui on the wire, "well above the spectacular New York street scene."

"SUNSHINE OF PARADISE ALLEY."
"SUNSHINE OF PARADISE ALLEY."
"SUNSHINE OF PARADISE ALLEY."
"SUNSHINE OF PARADISE ALLEY."
"SUNSHINE OF PARADISE ALLEY."
"SUNSHINE OF PARADISE ALLEY."
"SUNSHINE OF PARADISE ALLEY."
"SUNSHINE OF PARADISE ALLEY."
"SUNSHINE OF PARADISE ALLEY."

Irish Wit! Jewish Humour!
You'll Laugh till you Cry!

Featuring

BARBARA BEDFORD
NIGEL BARRIE
MAX DAVIDSON
KENNETH M'DONALD, and
TUI LORRAINE
(A New Zealander).

Evening Post Wellington 18 November 1927.

17 Andre Charlot's revue had played on Broadway from 9 January 1924 and opened in Hollywood in May 1926,

WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY EVENING, MARCH 1, 1926
Matinees Thursday and Saturday

ARCH SELWYN
Presents

THE CHARLOT REVUE OF 1926

—with—
BEATRICE JACK GERTRUDE
LILLIE BUCHANAN LAWRENCE
DOUGLAS FURBER

Dances and Ensembles arranged by Jack Buchanan

ACT I.

OPENING—"HOW D'YOU DO?"

(Eric Blore, Dion Titheradge and Philip Braham)

As the Artists appear:

FENNER IRVING, BETTY STOCKFELD, GEORGE PUGHE,
JILL WILLIAMS, ERIC FAWCETT, HUGH SINCLAIR,
GERTRUDE LAWRENCE, BEATRICE LILLIE and JACK
BUCHANAN.

PROGRAM CONTINUED ON SECOND PAGE FOLLOWING

18 Reginald “Snowy” Baker played scrumhalf for the 1904 Australian rugby team and went on to box and swim at the 1908 Olympics; entrepreneur-showman, publicist and businessman.

19 Tui Lorraine’s presence in California was first reported on 12 February 1925 when she was among those attending a meeting of the Catholic Motion Picture Actors’ Guild in Hollywood. Jackie Coogan’s father presided and told the audience about his and Jackie’s audience with the Pope on a recent trip to Rome (*Advocate* [Melbourne] 12 February 1925).

She was in the news again on 21 July 1925, when her \$300 diamond ring was stolen,

Property Man Charged With Diamond Theft

A diamond ring worth \$300, the property of Miss Tui Lorraine, a motion-picture actress, was found yesterday in the pocket of Fred F. Summers, a property man, and he was arrested on suspicion of grand larceny, according to a report by the Hollywood police.

Miss Lorraine said she went Friday from her home at 5826 Hollywood Boulevard to a bungalow at 1948 Holly Drive, where she changed into a bathing suit and went with friends to the beach, leaving her ring in the house. When she returned it was gone.

Miss Lorraine, Detective Lieutenants Van Aken and Trosper said, gave them a list of those who had been in and near the bungalow Friday, Summers among them. They found Summers at a Hollywood hotel and arrested him, they said, after discovery of the ring. (*Los Angeles Times* 21 July 1925).

In January 1926 the *Los Angeles Evening Express* wrote, “To do one thing well is an asset, but to be able to be really expert in two things is a faculty that is not given to everyone. Tui Lorraine, singer and steel-guitar player, is one of those experts, as she demonstrated on the Wampas Club program sponsored by the Paul G. Hoffman Studebaker Company over KNX last Tuesday evening. Miss Lorraine has an excellent voice and plays the guitar with a deft touch that proves very entertaining.” (14 January 1926).



Los Angeles Times 21 July 1925

20 Pickfair was the home of Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. It became one of the most celebrated houses in the world. *Life* Magazine described it as "a gathering place only slightly less important than the White House... and much more fun".

21 Tui may have been bisexual and certainly David Stenn considers she was "lavender" (David Stenn 2000. *Clara Bow – Runnin' Wild*. Cooper Square Press, NY). Clara Bow's son told him Clara said Tui was "queer" sexually. Others have written that Stenn's was a hasty conclusion based on no good evidence. Tui doesn't even suggest it, but then in the 1970s she wouldn't.

In her account, gay Nils Asther says, "My darling Tui, is gud to see you. You look happy – is nice eh? This lovely friendship?" he nodded to where Clara had been, "with Clara – is nice, I like." And all the while with that knowing, wicked grin.

I flushed to the dark roots of my blonde hair.

"Nils, if I didn't love you so much I'd smack your gorgeous face. But me, I'm tolerant of all that hanky panky. But I wouldn't say that to Clara if I were you. She adores men only, especially romantic lovers – I could have sworn you knew that – heterosexual to the core, you know, *It* and all that jazz?"

Tui is tolerant of "hanky panky" but Clara is heterosexual.

22 Paul Bern married Jean Harlow in July 1932 and was shot dead two months later. The verdict (and David Stenn agrees) was suicide.

23 Probably Victor Fleming.

24 Robert S. Savage, son of Duluth, Minnesota steel millionaire, was a football hero at Yale; he was known as a man who never lost his head at a crucial moment. "Now that he is out on what the preachers of baccalaureate sermons are fond of calling the 'gridiron of life' he is becoming famous as a man who is always losing his heart. This tendency to fall deeply and frequently in love would not be so menacing to young Mr. Savage's life and so alarming to his friends if it were not for the unfortunate fact that he takes all his love affairs very seriously and is tremendously heart-broken when the beauty he has set his heart on won't have him. The latest

object of Mr. Savage's devotion was Clara Bow, the young Hollywood film actress. When she refused to marry him after a five days' ardent courtship he slashed his wrists with a razor blade and behaved in other ways so strangely that his friends had his sanity inquired into." (<https://clarabowarchive.tumblr.com/post/148507849791/savage-love-clara-bow-and-robert-savage>).

25 There were salacious reports that this was a sexual orgy with Clara and the whole team. "Gossip about Bow's private life was so pervasive that in 1931 the *Coast Reporter* ran a three-week series in which it named her as the mistress of several different men and claimed that she often had sex in public, engaged in threesomes with prostitutes, slept with women when no man was available, and turned to animals when no human companionship was at hand. These outrageous tales were widely believed by a public that assumed a publication wouldn't dare to print such stories unless they were true. (<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/clara-bow-peep/>). Morely Drury, on the other hand, told David Stenn, "Nothing happened. We never got involved in a 'bedroom scene' or anything like that. We were too damn innocent."

26 Ray Raymond died following a fist fight with another actor, Paul Kelly. The two men fought over Ray's wife, Dorothy Mackaye. Dorothy was convicted of concealing evidence and served 10 months; Paul Kelly was found guilty of manslaughter and served 2 years. (https://www.imdb.com/name/nm4912465/bio?ref=nm_ov_bio_sm).

27 He was Roger Ginders, Glory's second husband.

28 Probably a severe hyperventilation syndrome.

29 *Independent-Herald* (Yuba City) 21 October 1926.

30 INJURY OF STUNT GIRL DISCLOSED

Victim of Wild Horses at Universal City Ordered Taken to Hospital

Suffering a sudden turn for the worse yesterday after convalescing at home for a week following a mysterious mishap that was not reported to officials at Universal City, Miss Tui Lorraine, actress and stunt woman, yesterday was moved to Hollywood Hospital on orders of her physician Dr Delmar Davis.

She was reported at the hospital to be under treatment for spinal injuries, bruised arms and legs and severe nervous shock, sustained on the Universal studio grounds when a team of wild horses dragged her for several hundred feet during the filming of "Great Shootin'," a western picture directed by Ray Taylor.

Miss Lorraine, an actress of considerable promise and a slack-wire performer of merit, was not thought at the time of the accident to have been hurt badly and she was taken home in a studio automobile. However, when her condition became worse, a report of the mishap was made to the organization officials and last night it was announced that "everything possible" was being done to restore her health. (*Los Angeles Times* 20 March 1927).

In 1927 prolific director Ray Taylor made a ten part serial for Universal Pictures, now lost, called *Whispering Smith Rides*; none of the parts was called *Great Shootin'* but the name may have been changed before release.

31 The newspapers reported Clara's self-inflicted wounds as accidental: "The evil effects of drinking fresh clear mountain spring water have delayed the start of Clara Bow's new picture, 'Red Hair.' Clara took a week's vacation between pictures and passed it in the national forest in the Sierras. Wishing a drink, she dropped to her knees along a limpid pool, but her knee slipped, Clara's head went under water, and a submerged stone cut a considerable gash. Her friend, Tui Lorraine helped Clara stanch the blood on the way back to camp. Clara can't start her new picture until the scar heals. (*Daily News* New York 4 November 1927).

32 Tui makes no mention of her wedding ceremony. Various reasons have been concocted as to why she married Bob Bow; after all she thought him "an irascible old pest". Marriage to an American might solve her immigration problems... would keep her close to Clara (because they were lovers)... would make her rich... was at Clara's insistence... but the reality, at least as she tells it, is much more mundane. They were wed in San Bernadino on 22 September 1928. She was twenty-three (she said 21 in the announcement), he fifty-three (he said 45).

BOW-LEIGH—Robert Walter Bow, 46,
New York; Tui Lorraine Leigh, 21,
New Zealand. Both of Los Angeles.

San Bernardino County Sun 23 September 1928.

“Then he married a New Zealand actress answering to the name of Tui Lorraine. Tui, whose vocabulary runs from bizarre to explosive, somehow made her way into the Bow menage...” wrote columnist John C. Moffitt much later, in a series on Clara Bow. (*Des Moines Tribune* 30 January 1933).



New York's *Daily News* gleefully (and inaccurately) reported, “NEW STEP-MA OF CLARA BOW IN ALIEN JAM. Imagine Tui Lorraine's surprise when, after this 25-year-old New Zealand beauty contest winner has been married to Robert Bow, twenty-odd years her senior and father of Clara Bow, she discovers she has not been endowed with American citizenship after all, and is to be deported as an alien who has violated Uncle Sam's immigration code. Good looking Tui, who was known for a time as secretary to her present

stepdaughter, and whose job was to slit the fan mail envelopes that engulf Clara, eloped with Bob Bow last week...." (27 September 1928).

Robert Bow's sexual enthusiasm left Tui, she told David Stenn, "disenchanted with what marriage was all about. If there is such a thing as a male nymphomaniac, Bob was one. A woman can put up with just so much and then she wants a rest, if you know what I mean." (*Runnin' Wild*).

ACTRESS TO GO BUT
HOPES TO RETURN



Tui Lorraine

**TIME LIMIT
EXPIRES FOR
BOW'S BRIDE**

*Tui Lorraine Expected to
Leave Country by Way of
Calxico*

Los Angeles Times 26 October 1928.

The immigration rules obliged Tui to leave the US so she went to Mexicali in Baja California with Robert Bow and applied there for readmission as the wife of an American citizen. She finally received her visa and passport in December and re-entered the US via Vancouver in early 1929: "She still admits she 'don't know what it's all about'." (*Napa Journal* 13 January 1929).

33 Olive Ann Pixley 1885–1972, poet, author of *The Weaver & other poems* 1950, *Solo Flight & other poems* 1963. She is probably the person named "Wave" in Tui's dedication. If the original was typed by another person from handwritten copy, "Wave" may be a typo for "Olive". She was a lawyer in the US Naturalization department.

34 Two weeks after her marriage came this wink-nudge piece, from gossip columnist Edward Mitchell, "Just fancy the position of Clara Bow! For two years Tui Lorraine has been in turn her secretary, companion and closest pal. And then, this week, Tui up and marries Clara's pa. Robert and Tui are back from a brief honeymoon, but they still will not disclose the time nor the place of the wedding. And Clara and her new step-mother are again going about together to the Legion fights, the cafes and beach dancing parties, making whoopee just the same as ever, while Mr. Bow sees to the conduct of his steak house on Beverly Boulevard." (*Baltimore Sun* 7 October 1928).

35 Fans did not like Bow's transformation from comedienne to tragedienne. One critic said she was "Out of Her Hotsy Totsy Element..." another, "Clara Bow plays the moll to a yegg and tries to emote and go dramatic, which will not bring cheers from her fans who want her to bubble sex." (quoted by Sam Bruce Purkiss, MA thesis 2022: "*A more innocent and permissible face: gender, Clara Bow, and the Hollywood studio system, 1922–1933.*" (https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_olink/r/1501/10?clear=10&p10_accession_num=miami1650630783930714).

36 In April 1929 Tui was cast in a one-act play *The Silver Candlestick* by Joan Curtis at the Cordova Play Shop in Los Angeles. In September at the same theatre, "Tui Lorraine Bow, another rising celebrity of

the screen, who made her original dramatic success on the European stage (*sic!*), is also to have a leading role in one of the productions." In October she played there in *The Rush Light* on the same night as Sol Clark's *Fear* was staged. (*Los Angeles Evening Express* 8 October 1929).

37 They had married in September and the next July Tui sued for divorce, the unmentioned reason being Bow's repeated infidelities.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported with breathtaking inaccuracy, "She and Clara Bow had been friends for many years and worked together in a number of pictures.... She has been working in talking films and in making phonograph recordings... She asserted she had lived in the country since she was 5 years of age." (3 July 1929).

**Flapper Wife Asks Decree
From Clara Bow's Father**

**Robert, Erstwhile of Coney Hot-dog Fame, Sticks Too
Close to Fireside, Vivacious Tui Lorraine Charges.**

Robert Bow, father of the titian haired film star, Clara, has been swept into the turgid life of Hollywood and according to Coast dispatches, the former Coney Island waiter is about to be divorced by his 21-year-old wife, Tui Lorraine.

Tui was a "girl friend" of Clara in their extra days. Clara introduced her to Robert, and with scenario speed they were married. After a year of matrimony, he has been relegated to the Fireside Companions' Club, for Mrs. Lul Lorraine Bow said: "I'm young and like to dance and play. My husband wanted to stay at home all the time."

Years ago Robert served steins and hot dogs at Coney Island. Then

the movies swept his family to affluence via the warm Clara and Robert went to the Coast.

He idled about for a time, then Clara bought him a hot dog stand not far from Hollywood. He did well, backed by Coney experience, but matrimony isn't selling hot dogs, according to the suing Mrs. Bow.

Mr. Bow probably will go back to his bow-wows.

Times Union (Brooklyn) 3 July 1929.

Divorces Clara Bow's Daddy



NEA Los Angeles Bureau
She no longer is Clara Bow's stepmother. Tui Lorraine Bow, about the same age as Clara and a former "playmate" of the famous "IT" girl, is pictured here as she sat in a Los Angeles court and was awarded a divorce on grounds of cruelty from Robert Bow, Clara's father. Tui is an actress, too.

Santa Cruz Evening News 1 August 1929

DIVORCES CLARA BOW'S DAD



Tui Lorraine Bow, who used to be a chum of the firm star but later became her stepmother, snapped in Los Angeles superior court as she was granted a divorce from Robert Bow, Clara's father, on grounds of cruelty.

New Castle News 25 July 1929.

Clara Bow Will Lose Stepmother In Divorce Court



Tui Lorraine Bow

LOS ANGELES, July 8.—Eight months of married life with Robert Bow, father of Clara Bow, is enough for Tui Lorraine Bow, film star, screen actress and radio singer. She has announced she will seek a divorce in Los Angeles, giving "I'm 21 and he's more than 45" as sufficient explanation.

YOUNG STEP-MOTHER OF "IT" GIRL GIVEN A DIVORCE DECREE

Robert Bow, 45, Cruel, Used Caveman Tactics, Claim Of Tui Lorraine.

Los Angeles, July 22.—(U.P.)—The 21-year-old dancer, who became the step-mother of Clara Bow, "it" girl of the screen, by marrying the actress' father, today obtained an uncontested divorce decree on charges of mental cruelty.

Tui Lorraine, the young wife, described the asserted caveman tactics of Robert Bow when they began to quarrel three months after their marriage.

The red-haired dancer said that Bow violently tore her bedroom door from its hinges and called her obscene names and refused to allow her to entertain her girl friends.

"Just a little before we separated he knocked me down with his fist," she told Judge C. E. Beaumont. "His jealousy got worse all the time. He just wanted to sit around the house and be with me all day. I wanted to dance and play around.

"The difference in our ages is too great. I am just 21 and he is more than 45. He has lived his life and I am just beginning mine. There was no hope of happiness."

Miss Lorraine, a New Zealand girl, gained the right to remain in the United States when she married Bow, previously immigration authorities had attempted to deport her for over-staying her visiting time.

Reading Times
(Pennsylvania) 9 July 1929.

Missoulian (Montana) 23 July 29.

The divorce nourished the gossip press for months. A piece originally published by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (25 August 1929) was republished widely,

“ROBERT BOW is the father of Clara Bow. But he doesn’t seem to inherit from his famous daughter her famous “It.” Anyway, he can’t hold his young wives. Surely he couldn’t hold his last two. Most certainly he couldn’t hold the last one.

Tui Lorraine Bow, chum of his daughter, and younger than Clara, told it to Superior Judge Campbell Beaumont, in Los Angeles. The Judge answered with an interlocutory decree.

Tui’s testimony set out that Pa Bow was cruel, jealous, profane, abusive and quarrelsome. The honeymoon, she said, had scarcely blossomed when he began fighting. She said the marriage had been a great mistake, anyhow – that a man of 45 is no happy choice as a husband for a girl of 21. Meriwyn Thayer and Minnie Deland, friends, corroborated her statements under oath.

Tui thereupon promptly signed a picture contract.

Now, back of all this is a series of interesting details. Clara’s mother is only a distant memory of her childhood. The widower, Bow, carried on as best he could, and how well he did is attested not only by his daughter’s present status in this world, but by the fact that through everything she has clung to him devotedly, affectionately and gratefully.

He was only a Coney Island waiter when Clara came on earth – but they say he was a good one. When Clara was started on her career he joined her in Hollywood. She knew a lot of young aspirants, extra girls mainly. Pa Bow married one of these – and that marriage ended by his pleading for an annulment on grounds of failing to be loving and dutiful.

Some months intervened and Clara, now at the peak of her success, brought home as her secretary and companion a youthful Australian beauty, Tui Lorraine, a professional dancer eager to crash the film heights.

Pa Bow liked Tui, Clara liked Tui, and Tui liked them both. It was a happy and serene menage. Then into this nest of peace, as the title-writers would mush, crept the serpent. The serpent wore a

blue coat with brass buttons and flashed a badge from the Immigration Department.

Tui had done nothing, mind you. She had come in from Australia properly enough on a quota. But the quota was a limited one allowing artists to remain a stated period. The serpent hissed that her native country was paging her.

Here, then, indeed was a dilemma. Tui didn't want to go and Clara didn't want Tui to go, and Pa didn't want to make Clara unhappy and didn't want Tui to go, moreover. So he came through with what seemed a happy proposal – a proposal, any way you say it: why should he not marry Tui, thus making her an American citizen by matrimony?

And so they were married. And Pa and his bride went to Vancouver, whence Tui Bow made a regular entrance into the United States as the wife of an American.

Clara seemed delighted. Her new stepmother stepped in and the three went stepping out frequently and drew the reputation of the happiest family in the colony, which is not distinguished for its domestic googoo.

Clara set her dad up in business, opening for him a gorgeous restaurant. It didn't click. Pa said the location was unfavorable. So Clara helped him to a finer and gaudier one, on the Main Stem of Los Angeles. Over it blazoned in electric bulbs:

CLARA BOW'S STEAK AND CHOP HOUSE

The roving eye of one of the heads of the corporation managing Clara saw the twinkling, blazing effusion. He put thumbs down on the sign and on the name over the café. Clara tried to popularize the establishment by making personal appearances there nightly, but, like Pa's marriages, his restaurants didn't live long. That one closed, too.

Through it all, the most amazing and pleasant fact is that the high and much-in-demand star, Clara, has never wavered in her fidelity to and love for her father. Though he twice married to women younger than herself, she never interposed an objection or a protest.

And that takes in his romance with Idella Mowry, whom he made the second Mrs. Bow, with whom Clara was in no such intimate and chummy harmony as with Idella's successor, Tui.

By Bow's own testimony, he classified Idella as a gold-digger, and he swore that on the wedding night she compelled him to sleep on the floor.

During the apparently hostile relations, between Bow and that wife, Clara's attitude to her was friendly, hospitable and courteous.

She, herself, has been showered with proposals and reported engaged dozens of times to a wide range of eligible, including movie stars, football stars, financial stars and nobodies.

Miss Bow living her own life, is rarely seen in public and is liked by the few close associates she chums with because of the size of her head – which has not increased visibly since she attained her amazing position in her craft.

She is whimsical, vivacious and temperate.

One of the very few persons to whom she really became closely attached was her father's most recent wife, Tui, a sophisticated young woman who had trod the boards almost around the world, and who had mingled with the highbrow circles of several lands. Pa Bow must have been a strange contrast to her after her experience, because he makes no pretensions to eligibility among the intelligentsia.

A beautiful blond girl, she had little difficulty making the screen when her marriage ties were broken. Clara interjected no influence against her. She doesn't mind who profits from being linked with her name, directly, collaterally or remotely. That she lent it to her father's eating house is one proof. That she allowed a number of climbers to report their engagement to her in order that they might bask in the reflected light of her renown backs it up. No one can say Clara Bow isn't good-natured.

In fact, it is said up and down the boulevards of Hollywood that diminutive Clara still entertains a strong feeling of affection for her old chum, Tui. Tui is cute, Tui is merry and good company. "Why," says Clara, "should we quarrel over a little thing like matrimonial differences? Those two simply didn't get along together, that's all."

So Clara goes her way and Tui goes hers. And Pa? Well, he's pretty lucky, too, because he still has Clara, who adores him just as much now as she did in the days when he was a Coney Island waiter and they were both poor.



Left: "Tui and Pa Bow in their wedding day smiles and raiment."
(Actually no: it's a wedding photo from Bob Bow's previous marriage to Idella Mowery). **Right:** "Tui's smile of joy when she learned recently that she was no longer married to Bob Bow."

38 Devoe was later convicted of stealing from Clara Bow and imprisoned. On her release journalist Fredric Girnau published *Clara's Secret Love-Life as Told to Daisy*, one of the most notorious and slanderous tell-alls about a movie star in Hollywood history. It accused Bow, according to David Stenn, of 'promiscuity and exhibitionism, kinkiness and incest, lesbianism and bestiality, drug

addiction and alcoholism, venereal disease and family insanity'. Girnaux was sentenced to eight years for sending the lewd and lascivious pamphlet through the mail, but the accompanying scandal contributed to the decline of the 26-year old Bow's career. Daisy Devoe may have been wrongly convicted and that is the position taken by Laini Giles in her 2017 fictional account *The It Girl and Me: a Novel of Clara Bow* (in which she dismisses Tui Lorraine, conflating her actions with Daisy Devoe's).

Why Did Clara Fire Her?



NEWEST MOVIE MYSTERY—Daisy Devoe, confidential secretary to Clara Bow for many years, tells her Los Angeles attorney the jewelry and clothing taken from her, as property stolen from Clara, was purchased by herself. Both seem indignant.

Standard Union Brooklyn 19 November 1930: Daisy Devoe, a picture of nunnish probity for her court appearance, with her lawyer.

39 By having an affair with a married man Clara had violated a “morals clause” in her contract forbidding “public scandal”. Paramount took \$26,000 from her trust fund and \$30,000 in bonuses from her last three pictures and offered it all to Elizabeth Pearson to keep Clara’s name out of the divorce. She agreed, but the story got out anyway. Pearson and his wife reconciled, kept the money and had two sons while he practised in Dallas.

40 Clara seems to have inherited her mother’s psychotic illness which became evident in later life.

41 It does still exist – as the Hotel Brevoort.

42 Tui recovered quickly from the divorce and was looking good: Gossip columnist Mollie Merrick wrote in November 1929, about “something that happened the other night at the Roosevelt,”

In a big display evening which included most of the Hollywood stars a weary lady was searching for someone who looked different.

“Some one,” she explained to me, “with more than mere beauty, not aristocracy, exactly, but personality and style.”

I picked a girl who obviously wore a blond transformation. An amazing wig, parted in the center and combed down plainly to be coiled in a knot at the nape of the neck. She wore a flesh-colored velvet evening gown cut in the latest extravagance of the mode. Slim and tight about her torso, it billowed out into a circular skirt with billowing godets, tiny flesh satin slippers twinkled in and out.

The effect was exquisite. I couldn’t restrain my curiosity. I called the manager of the hotel. Who is the new beauty? He glanced across the heads of the dancers.

“Oh, that,” said he, “Is Tui Lorraine, Clara Bow’s mother-in-law. She divorced Robert Bow a couple of months ago.”

43 Chevalier was accused of collaborating with the Nazis.

44 *The Thin Man* (1934). Tui’s first talkie in which she played a nonspeaking, uncredited, brief role as the stenographer. A languidly stylish movie, available on DVD.



Tui as the stenographer in *The Thin Man* (1934).

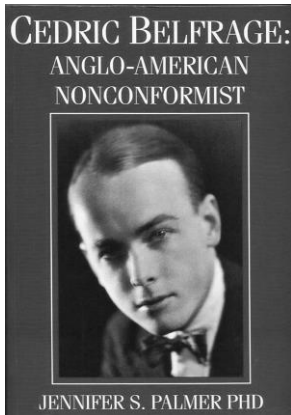
45 In 1931 Einstein was invited to the premiere of the film *City Lights* in Los Angeles. He stated that of all the celebrated people with whom he had chatted about his theories, one of the few who had shown any understanding was Charlie Chaplin.

Einstein: "What I most admire about your art, is your universality. You don't say a word, yet the world understands you!"

Chaplin: "True. But your glory is even greater! The whole world admires you, even though they don't understand a word of what you say."

46 Cedric Belfrage admitted having passed information to Russia during WWII while he was working for MI6, but was never prosecuted for espionage, ostensibly because his exposure would have embarrassed the British government too much.

(<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-34012395>). See his biography below.



47 Sally Belfrage became a well known nonfiction writer and international journalist, covering Northern Ireland, the American Civil Rights Movement and her own memoirs.

48 Okolehao is an alcoholic liquor distilled from ti or taro roots in Hawaii.

49 Sol was only 50,

*Film Official Dies
of Heart Attack*

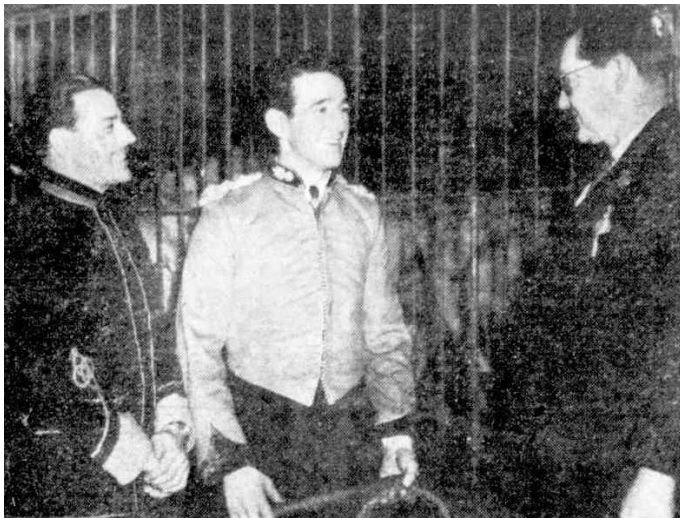
Sol N. Clark, 50, purchasing agent for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios, died of a heart attack at his home, 504 North Louise street, Glendale, early today.

Funeral services will be held at Forest Lawn Memorial park tomorrow afternoon, his wife, Vera Clark, said.

LA Evening Post-Record 12 July 1933.

50 Tui's brother Edward Leigh (b. 7 January 1908) died in 1984. Her brother Clyde Cahill (b. 12 June 1909) was fined for treating a donkey cruelly in 1927. He served as a private with the NZ Medical Corps of the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force in WWII. He was a nurse in Waihi in 1972 and died there in 1978.

Her youngest brother William Owen Leigh/Cahill/Lorraine was performing in 1924 (“The youthful trap drummer and contortionist, Master Owen Cahill, of Australia, is a juvenile prodigy”), was (as Owen Lorraine) driving Glory and Roger Ginders’s vaudeville show in 1934 and later that year was performing in the “Aerial Lorraines” at the Ngaruawahia regatta where he was fined for staging an illegal wrestling contest, as “public decency (was) offended” (“Constable H. Hodge gave evidence that when he entered Lorraine’s marquee at the regatta a wrestling bout was in progress between a man and a woman. A prize of £1 was offered to any man who could kiss the woman on the lips. The man in question did not succeed”). He was in Australia in 1940, fined at the Temora Show for “becoming offensive” to a police officer. He and Eva Leahnora Reed (born in Nelson in 1912) were married in Sydney in 1942. He served in the Australian army 1941–44. In 1945 Owen Lorraine was an acrobat with Wirth’s Circus and in May 1945 made the news when he volunteered to run the lion taming act in Newcastle when the usual tamer was delayed. The lions did not cooperate.



The Wirth’s Circus lion tamers in 1945: Owen Lorraine at left.

Owen Lorraine died at Potts Point in 1975 and is buried at Rookwood cemetery, Sydney.

51 Ramon Novarro was murdered by two male prostitutes who believed he had a large sum of money with him.

52 She did sing in Newcastle (“DIRECT FROM HOLLYWOOD”),



Newcastle Sun 3 December 1942.

53 Chloe: “She is a Melbourne icon, mascot for the HMAS *Melbourne*, an extremely fine work of art; she is an ingénue, a nymph, a celebrity. She is Chloe, the famous nude portrait which has graced the walls of the Young and Jackson Hotel since 1909.” (<https://www.youngandjacksons.com.au/chloe>).

54 Glory’s husband Roger Ginders was then communications officer at the airport on Norfolk Island. He was born 8 May 1896 in Masterton. He trained at the Dominion College of Radio Telegraphy and worked as wireless operator on the trans-tasman vessel *Paloona* in 1920 and must have been in a similar position on the ship carrying Glory back to New Zealand from California. Tui Lorraine Leigh was a referee for Roger Ginders’s application for immigration in 1940. He served in the Australian Army 1941–45 and was a corporal in an intelligence unit.

55 Carrie A. Nation, aka Hatchet Granny, was a radical member of the temperance movement.

56 The *Sydney Morning Herald* remarked of her role in *The Irishman*, “Another interesting cast member is Tui Lorraine Bow,

the step-daughter (sic) of America's 'It' girl of the silent film era, Clara Bow."

Tui also had small parts in *Heatwave* (1982, as Annie); and *Frenchman's Farm* (1987, as Miss Morton).

She died on 25 March 1993. Among her effects was a mahogany "Martin Soprano Type 1, 1927" ukulele in its case, which found its way to a vintage guitar seller in Denmark Hill London. It was said to have been given to Tui by Clara Bow. When New Zealand Māori jazz instrumentalist the late Chuck Morton bought it, he was delighted to find in the case, "hand written Maori song lyrics amongst other things. On the case are several old shipping labels showing that she used to travel to New Zealand from California. On the shipping labels her name is given as Tui L Bow."

In 2017 Alia Faith Williams's new play, *Clara Bow, Becoming 'It'* was staged at the Capital Fringe Festival in Washington DC. Maggie Robertson played both Tui Lorraine and Daisy Devoe (conflated again!). It was not a great success.



Tui as Annie in *Heatwave* (1982)



Tui Bow makes a “special appearance” as Miss Morton in *Frenchman’s Farm* (1987) at age 82.



Australian Women's Weekly 29 March 1978.
Tui Bow and Bob Sweeney (who played Nat Simpson) at the
premiere of *The Irishman*.



"For dear Schreckie, a regular girl and good pal.
Best always, Tui Lorraine." International photograph.
But who was "Schreckie"?

Tui Lorraine Bow was born in Hawera to a sexually indiscriminate but musically well educated Irish Catholic mother, physically abused as an infant and raised by her grandmother till puberty. She then settled into her mother's circus family with a drunken, violent but highly talented Australian stepfather and, along with her brothers, learned to sing, dance, play the guitar, walk the tight wire and perform as a contortionist. By eighteen she had had enough and set out for Hollywood and the movies. It was Hollywood's golden age. She formed a close relationship with Clara Bow, the "It" girl, the most famous star of the time and she married Bow's father. Tui Bow knew many of the great names of the silent movie era and in her early years was a star in her own right. In her seventies she wrote the autobiography that forms the basis of this book. Illustrations and extensive notes have been added.

Ian St George is a retired doctor and amateur historian who has written a series of notes on New Zealand born silent movie stars.