



THE SINGING FOOL

by

HUBERT DAIL

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"The Singing Fool", starring Al Jolson, is a Warner Bros. picturization of this novel.

SYNOPSIS

Al Stone, singing waiter at Blackie Joe's New York night club, is loved by Grace Farrel, the cigarette girl, but he doesn't know it. He marries Molly Winton, a ballad singer, and wins fame as a composer of popular songs. When their baby Junior is about two years old, Molly elopes with John Perry, Al's best friend. She and Perry take the child Al adores and sail for France. Al, completely broken by his tragic loss, disappears from Broadway and becomes a derelict. One day, as he wanders down a back street, he sees Grace Farrel on the opposite corner. He runs away and Grace hastens to Blackie Joe's club to tell him the news.

CHAPTER XXII

"I just saw someone we both know" Grace began with a tired rather set little smile. "Al Stone."

"No?" Blackie put down his cigar. "Where?"

Briefly Grace related the circumstances of their encounter.

"So he ran away from you, did he?" said Blackie, nodding thoughtfully. "I can understand that—ashamed to meet his old friends. That always happens when a man begins to slip. And his clothes looked old, did they? Well, well."

Suddenly Blackie's expression changed.

"Grace, are you still fond of him?" "I don't know," she answered frankly. "I was asking myself that as I walked along. Of course I like him if you mean only that. But if you mean love, well, you know, Blackie, love dies after a time. Or at least we pretend it dies, to protect ourselves—I shall always consider Al one of my best and truest friends—I know that."

Grace's eyes were half closed as she spoke, as if she feared the look that memory might bring them. And a controlled little smile set her lips.

"You told me once, Grace, that you'd never fall in love with anyone else."

"That's true—I haven't."

Blackie nodded. He knew that other men, some of them quite personable, had been attentive to Grace since Al left. She had gone to dinner with them, laughed and talked with them, but—they seemed unable to make a serious impression on her. The reason was obvious—she had the dream of Al in between her and these later comers.

During the three years Grace had developed from a child into a woman. She was still slender and lovely, but there was a quiet dignity about her and a feeling of poise that she had acquired only recently. Blackie wondered what Al would think of her if he saw her closely now.

Then he returned to the subject of their missing friend. "You don't know any way we can find him?"

"How can we?" Grace made a gesture of despair. "Everyone has tried to find him and failed. But at least we do know he's in New York. That's something. I should imagine, from his clothes, that he's living in some poor quarter of the city."

Grace, following Blackie's idea, was filled with a sudden determination. Why not try to find Al? She just might be successful and, whether she loved him or not, he was her good friend. He was worth saving!

Grace set out on her journey to find Al the very next afternoon, when she was free from work. Her plan was simple—she simply walked the streets where she had seen him the day before, combing the neighborhood thoroughly. But at the end of the first day's search she hadn't caught a glimpse of him nor found a single clue. It was as if he knew she might try this very thing and so had made himself scarce in that particular neighborhood. Grace appeared at Blackie's

in the evening tired out and disappointed, but not entirely discouraged.

The next day she tried again; for a week she pursued her quest with an indomitable spirit. But each day there was the same story to tell—no trace of Al. Finally Blackie said to her:

"You'd better give up that hunt. This town is too big—you simply can't comb it properly. Al would be able to dodge and keep out of sight if one hundred detectives were after him."

Grace nodded. "I guess you're right, Blackie—I'm just wasting my time. Still I'm glad I tried; I never would have felt satisfied until I made the effort—after seeing him that one time."

Meanwhile, Al continued his wandering life, never dreaming that Grace was trying to find him. If he had known it, he would have stayed in his room all day to avoid being found. But instead he pursued his casual way, loitering on the docks, eating at the cheapest lunch counters.

After his disappearance he had read the papers carefully for news of Molly and Junior. One day a news dispatch from Paris caught his eye.

"Mrs. Al Stone, known to the Broadway stage as Molly Winton, is one of the number of American women who have filed suits for divorce in the French courts recently. Mrs. Stone alleges extreme cruelty and desertion. It is understood that Mr. Stone's divorce is granted she will marry John Perry, well known bon vivant of Broadway. The couple are seen together a great deal at the Riviera resorts, where Mrs. Stone's beauty and chic attire have attracted a great deal of favorable attention. On the beach she is frequently accompanied by her baby son, Junior Stone."

"Meanwhile Al Stone's old friends from Broadway are wondering what has become of the former successful song writer. At one time it was said that he, too, had come to France, but this was denied by those in the know."

Al had dropped the paper with a bitter smile. So Molly was charging him with cruelty and desertion! The terrible irony of the accusations dazed him for a moment. And Molly was preparing to marry Perry!

Oh, well, it didn't matter; nothing mattered any more! Let her make any charges she wished to get her freedom. Yet the picture of Junior, on the Riviera beach with his mother, remained with Al for a few days. He wondered if Junior still chattered and laughed as he had in the old days and whether he remembered his daddy?

Al looked down at his shabby clothes. He certainly wouldn't want Junior to see him as he appeared now—the personification of failure. No, Junior must never know what had become of his daddy. Al's pride was strong enough for him to make the decision.

After that Al still studied the newspapers for other items concerning his family, but nothing else appeared. Nor did Molly send any letters. Al had left word that his mail was to be forwarded care of an obscure East Side bank, where he had placed his money. But every time he called at the bank for additional money, and asked for letters, he found none from Molly. Letters from Marcus and all his old Broadway friends drifted in but these he quickly tore up without opening them.

Recently he had ceased to read the papers or to ask for letters. His interest in life was dwindling, narrowing down to the smallest circle. Even this interest was passive rather than active—he did not really care about sleeping, dressing, eating, wandering through the streets. It was done simply through habit—his last hold on life. If that passed from him one of these days it meant dark oblivion for the man who had once been light-hearted Al Stone.

CRIMINALS ARE ROUTED BY RADIO IN DETROIT

Radio's use as a swift and efficient police weapon in the never-ending battle against crime and the criminal has been demonstrated by the Detroit Police Department, writes Ralph L. Peters in the November issue of Radio News. Snaring criminals in a radio network woven by the police radio station and swift, powerful police automobiles equipped with receiving sets and loud speakers has become a matter of split seconds, this writer continues. In fact, the perfecting of the radio system has enabled the Detroit police to achieve arrests less than thirty seconds after the report of a crime has been given the police dispatcher.

Eight hundred arrests, at an average time of less than 90 seconds each, have been made by the radio-equipped automobiles of the Detroit police in the past fifteen months. More than 15,000 messages have been given the cars and more than half of these have been direct orders to proceed to the scene of some actual or reported crime. The balance of the messages have been descriptions of wanted and missing persons, license numbers of stolen cars, and other police information.

Burglars have been trapped in homes they were looting. Bandits have been captured or killed as they fled from hold-ups; hit-and-run drivers been overtaken, arrested and returned to the scene where they had left hapless victims lying in the street. Bad-check passers; "shovers" of counterfeit money; apartment-house mailbox robbers; annoyers of women; car thieves and racketeers of various sorts have all been caught by the crews of police cruisers sent speeding to the scene by orders transmitted broadcast by radio.

WILL OFFER SKETCHES OF OLD SOUTH

Sketches of the Old South are to be offered weekly to radio audiences in a new series of programs entitled "Planters Pickers" which begin over the NBC System, Friday night, October 25th, at 10.00 o'clock, Eastern Standard Time. The Hallelujah Singers, a Negro quartet, and Billy Artz with his orchestra will be the featured artists.

This ensemble promises a half hour of variety and novelty. Old Southern melodies painting visions of the romantic scenes below the Mason and Dixon Line will be blended with classical compositions and popular music of today. The selections will be interspersed with the semi-religious Negro spirituals. Skits reflecting the irrepressible humor and happiness of the colored farm worker at his daily toil or evening revelries will add realistic touches.

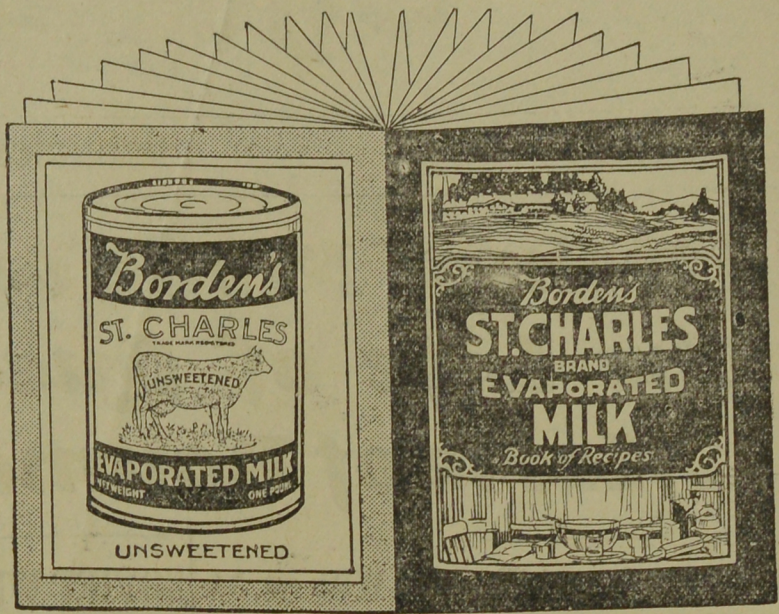
Billy Artz was formerly director of the Rose Room Orchestra of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Artz has become to dance lovers almost as traditional as the famous hotel itself. He confesses a weakness for the music of the Viennese masters and wants to perpetuate their genius here.

The Hallelujah Singers were organized by Rosamund Johnson. Johnson is considered an outstanding authority on the peculiar music of his race the spirituals, and the Hallelujah Singers will present his arrangements of this music.

Those Yale scientists who name 507 situations that make men peevish should, if they didn't, include riveting one riveter can make thousands fume.

Seeing Grace on the street had proved a terrible disturbing shock to him. In running away he had followed his first impulse—but afterward his conscience had bothered him. He knew Grace's feelings would be hurt. After all, Grace had been one of his best pals back in the old days at Blackie Joe's. He remembered her as she had looked then—a startled fawn of a child. She had certainly developed into a stunning girl.

(To be continued)



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