



THE SINGING FOOL

by
HUBERT DAIL

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"The Singing Fool", starring Al
Jolson, is a Warner Bros.,
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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 the loss, disappears from Broadway and becomes a derelict. One day Grace Farrel sees him on the street, but he runs away. Grace starts a search for him, which ends in failure. But the image of Grace remains vividly in Al's mind.

CHAPTER XXIII

Something of Al's old generous spirit toward Grace returned as he thought of her. How concerned her expression had been yesterday as she stared at him from across the street. Yet his feeling toward her was not strong enough to overcome the resistance of his desire to separate himself from the old life.

In spite of all that, however the memory of her face remained in his mind. Perhaps it was this memory that brought him up sharply about three o'clock one morning before a house that seemed strangely familiar. Surely he knew these outside steps and that entrance. It was Blackie Joe's place.

Slowly, scarcely knowing what he was doing, Al mounted the shabby stairs toward the little gleam of light he saw at the top. Yes, he was sure of the place now; an intense longing possessed him to see the inside of the old familiar place where he had won his earliest triumphs. Only a few years had passed since those happy-go-lucky nights, but the time seemed like a century.

He stopped before the heavy, bolted door. It was a new door, much stronger than the one Al had known. The many raids of the prohibition agents had forced Blackie to take additional precautions; his place was better guarded now.

Al knocked against the panel set high in the door and presently it opened. A strange face gazed at him and the eyes became more suspicious every moment as their owner looked him up and down, noting his dilapidated clothes.

"Is Blackie Joe here?"

"Who wants to know?" asked the guard curtly.

"I do I know him?"

There was a pause, then: "G'wan

beat it! He's got no time for the likes of you!"

The panel closed with a slam. Al nodding listlessly, began to descend the stairs. He shrugged his shoulders—it didn't matter.

Inside, Blackie had been standing fairly near the door. "Who wants me?" he called after the apartment was closed.

"Oh just some bum" said the doorkeeper scornfully.

Blackie nodded and turned to look over his dance floor. But as he did so there was a faint stir of curiosity in his mind. A bum—well, what did the bum want?

He walked over to the door and pulled open the panel. At the foot of the stairs, clearly silhouetted against the light, he saw a familiar face.

At first Blackie did not recognize the figure at the foot of the night club stairs as Al Stone, his old singing waiter. But the familiarity of the profile was striking enough to make Blackie throw open the door and call "Hey—you!"

At that, Al turned so that his face was illuminated by the light at the head of the stairs. Now Blackie was sure—he came rushing down the stairs to wring Al's hand.

"Hello, there kid!" Blackie almost shouted in his delight. "We've been wondering where you were. And to think—I almost let you get away!"

Al stared into the face of his former boss, smilingly faintly. It seemed as if Blackie would never relinquish that vigorous grip on his hand. A thrill of pleasure shot through Al—it was good to see some one at last who was really glad to see him, who beamed on him in the most friendly way imaginable. That hadn't happened to Al for months. He glanced away to hide his embarrassment at his shabby appearance.

Then Blackie linked his strong arm with Al's and led the young song writer up the stairs, talking as he went.

"You know, Al this is a big moment for us all. I want you to come in and meet the performers—some of them you know. And Grace is still with us—you remember her?"

Al nodded, but said nothing. Blackie saw he was dealing with a man who was not only bewildered but had definitely lost his gift for carrying on in the battle of life. The arm inside Al's coat sleeve was limp.

As they stepped inside the doorkeeper stared in amazement to see his well dressed employer walking arm in arm with this bum. What on earth did it mean?

It was well on toward daylight and

only a few customers remained in the main dining and dancing room.

"Come back to my office" suggested Blackie. "We'll have a good talk."

But Al stopped, scanning the familiar room as if he expected to find the ghosts of his former triumphs there. His eyes took on the look of concentration that is habitual with men who try to escape the world and commune only with themselves. He forgot that Blackie was standing beside him, looking solicitously into his face—Yes, there was the table where Molly and Marcus and the others sat on the night he sang "Always" to Molly. There was the old door leading to the bar. The floor show had ended but orchestra was playing and a few couples were dancing.

"Come" repeated Blackie and Al followed him toward the private office.

They sat down, facing each other. "Have a cigar, have a drink?" suggested the night club owner but Al shook his head. Then Blackie began again:

"Now boy, I wish you'd tell me all about it. What happened to you—where have you been hiding all these months?"

"Oh, here and there—just wandering about," Al replied noncommittally.

"Yes I know that. But do you know that Marcus has been after you? And a couple of song publishers have been paging you all over town."

"Yes I know it," came the strangely passive answer. "I'm not interested in all that. I told Marcus I was through and I meant it. I really don't know why I came here tonight—just happened to look up and saw your entrance. Couldn't stay away from the old place forever, I s'pose."

A hopeless feeling stole over Blackie. This was just the shell of the old Al; Blackie felt how strong that apparently listless resistance of his would be to any come back. Nevertheless he leaned forward and said earnestly.

"Al, you don't have to tell me how you feel—I know, it may seem strange to you, but I was knocked out once myself, in the same way, by a woman. For a while I thought there was no use living, then the day came when someone gave me a good stiff talking to. I decided to fight my way up again, and I did. I decided I wouldn't let one blow put me down for the count!"

"Blackie, the reformer" murmured Al. An expression somewhere between a smile and a sneer curved the corners of his mouth.

Blackie leaned back in his chair, hurt, but determined not to show it. In the old days Al could never have made a sardonic and bitter rejoinder like that.

"Do you still love Molly?" Blackie asked incredulously.

"No!" The sharp denial was the first show of life Al had shown. Blackie nodded in approval. Then Al seemed to think that some further explanation was needed. "She did for me and first I had to clean her out of my mind. I did that—then I tried to write. But I found I couldn't get interested. It was no use."

Just then a waiter stuck his head in the door and told Blackie a customer wanted to speak to him. Blackie rose.

"Excuse me a minute, Al. Make yourself at home—I'll be right back." (To be continued)

A doctor says our eyes are bad because we rush out of dark offices into the glaring sunlight. Bet that isn't the reason most people had in mind.

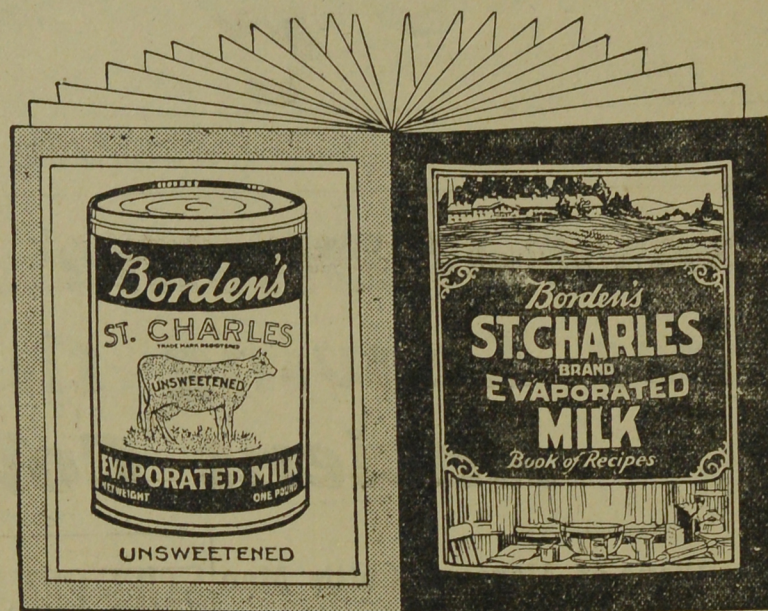
Lima Beane says the feeling often comes over him that he is merely the other side of a phonograph record.

Notice to Electors!

The Revisors will meet at the City Hall on the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd of October, 1929, between the hours of 3 p. m. and 5 p. m., and 7 p. m. and 9 p. m., for the purpose of revising the Voters' List.

Any person claiming to add or strike off, from the list, must give notice thereof, with the ground of addition (or with the cause of objection, as the case may be) to either of us on or before above dates.

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