

# Watching Tudie Get Her Cue

By Sewell Ford

Drawings by George Brehm



**T**ALK about your Cinderella happenin's! Say, wait till you hear what happens to me the other afternoon as I'm driftin' up Broadway just after finishin' a day at the Corrugated Trust, with nothin' but time on my hands and no evenin' engagement on my datebook.

Course, I wa'n't lookin' for anything more excitin' than maybe a bump between a taxi and a cross-town car, and I was just debatin' whether I should blow myself to a boat ride to Coney and a chowder dinner on the pier, or save up for Saturday afternoon. I'd heard this call once or twice too, comin' out clear above the street racket; but I hadn't noticed it partic'lar. Then it comes again:

"Oh, you! You boy with the red hair!"

And, say, that's my cue. There might be a dozen other chanti-deer tops in sight; but that cerise tinted thatch of mine would show up prominent just the same. So I knew it must be me that was bein' paged.

"Oh, you, yourself!" I sings out, whirlin' around.

And, shidin' alongside the curb, throttled down classy and slow, is a big yellow bodied joy wagon, with a young lady leanin' over the tonneau door to give me another hail. Honest, I must have gone woggle eyed at the view; for she's a little the flossiest Daizie Maizie you could find anywhere between the Flatiron and Columbus Circle, one of these real showy showgirl types, with a calcium carbide complexion, hair to match, pearl ear pendants four inches long, and a hobble skirted costume decorated like the hall of a Harlem flathouse.

Eh? Well, maybe that description wouldn't get by at a dressmakers' convention; but it ought to give you a some idea. She was a pink whizz with soufflé trimmin's.

"Come here, boy!" says she.

"Wrong number, Sis," says I. "The A. D. T. branch is on the next block, just around the corner."

"But I don't want a messenger," says she, swingin' open the tonneau door invitin'. "I want to talk to you."

"Me?" says I. "Ah, say, Lucile, what's the joke? I'm no little Claude, the kidnapper's joy, even if I do look simple."

"I know very well who you are," says she, "only I can't think what it was we used to call you."

"Torchy," says she, clappin' her hands. "That was it! Now don't you remember me?"

"Not guilty," says I.

"Why, we had rooms in the same house all last winter," says she, "and it was my cat you saved from the dog in the back yard when—"

"What!" says I. "Say, you ain't the amateur triller that used to punish the scales so reg'lar, are you?"

"The same," says she. "Six hours a day, until they put me out for it. But get in and I'll tell you the rest as we drive up Fifth-ave."

**H**OW could you dodge that? Maybe I didn't feel foolish too, pilin' into that giddy car and leanin' back alongside an eye dazzler like that. "Gee!" thinks I. "What if Mr. Robert or Piddie, or any of the office force, should spot me now?" But there I was, as elegant as you please.

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"It's Miss Dinneen, ain't it?" says I, the name comin' back to me.

"It was," says she; "Mary Dinneen."

"Well," says I, glancin' at her sideways, "I never would have guessed it. You did your hair diff'rent then."

She laughs at that. "And I didn't have as much to do, either," says she. "Also I wore toggy old dresses, and hideous hats, and ugly shoes. I was a sight then."

"Oh, I don't know," says I. "There was always more or less rubberin' as you came and went. Anyway, you're makin' up for lost time now, ain't you? What was it you struck, first prize at the annual drawin', or did you lead some broker to the Little Church Around the Corner?"

"I struck the front row, Torchy," says she, "and I had sense enough to cinch the management for a good contract."

"Oh!" says I. "Not one of the big roof garden girl shows? Yes? Say, you did land some hard, didn't you? And all them roomers was knockin' your voice, too!"

"It isn't much of a voice," says she. "I make the most of it, though; but that isn't why they let me sing the champagne song in a twenty-eight hundred dollar costume. Not much! There are a dozen better voices than mine in the chorus; but when it comes to putting over the bubbles and sparkles—well, that's what got me the job."

"Funny I ain't seen your name up on the posters?" says I.

"You have," says she, "only you didn't know it was mine. There it is now, on that construction fence where they're tearing down another church. See? The big blue letters."

"G'wan!" says I. "You don't mean you're Tudie Tremaine? Not the real Tudie?"

"Uh-huh," says she, in that ripply, cooin' way she has of talkin', which is somewhere between a giggle and a gargle.

"My press agent made up that name for

"It Was Putting Over the Bubbles and Sparkles that Got Me the Job," Says Tudie.

bardin' her with diamond knickknacks done up in bunches of orchids.

"Of course," she goes on, "Duke isn't very bright, and he's been going the pace; but he is good hearted, you know, and I have been steadyin' him down a little, I think. He will do anything I tell him. Why, he's out in the park now, taking my terrier for a walk. But what do you think?"

"Well, what?" says I. "Afraid the dog'll bite him, or that he'll bite the dog?"

"Nonsense!" says Tudie. "This is serious. Duke's father is here, waiting at my hotel. And he wants to see me. Me, mind you! He left word with my maid that he would wait until I came in; so Annette slipped down and watched for me and gave me the tip. That was an hour ago, and I've been driving around ever since, wondering what to do. I don't want to see Mr. Westover. And my manager is out of town, and Duke is exercising Quito in the park, and—and then I saw you and picked you up. Silly of me, wasn't it? Of



me, and poor Mary Dinneen has been lost in the shuffle. I don't care. Let her stay lost. She didn't amount to much, anyway; while Tudie Tremaine is— Well, what are you starin' at?"

"Was I?" says I. "Maybe I was just thinking how I ought to be beatin' it back to—"

"Oh, please don't!" she breaks in. "Surely you don't mind being seen with me—just a boy like you? And I must talk to some one, I simply must!"

Say, that was diff'rent. Maybe you've seen her doin' that fizzy song on the stage, with the squab ballet for a background? Yes? Then you know how wicked she can make them big eyes of hers behave. But she wa'n't lookin' that way then. Honest, I didn't know but she was goin' to start blubberin' on the spot.

"Can the leaky eyed business!" says I. "I expect I can have my publicity agent deny any reports that get out; but, accordin' to all I hear, you shouldn't have to go gunnin' up and down Broadway to find some one to swap conversation with. Why, Izzy Budheimer was telin' me how they had to have an extra stage door squad, just to keep the lobster palace rounders in line when you come out."

"There's plenty of that kind, I know," says Tudie; "but—but you don't understand. I don't want them. I'm dreadfully nervous. Something absurdly vexing has happened to me, and—and—well, I can trust you, I'm sure I can. Let me tell you about it."

**S**AY, how was that for a funny stunt, eh? Me bein' lugged off up Fifth-ave. in a giddy tourin' car by a party like Tudie Tremaine and asked to listen to a tale of woe! But I tells her to let it come along, and she does.

"It's about Duke—Duke Westover, you know," she begins.

"Ain't tried to punch another head waiter, has he?" says I.

No, this was something fresh, and besides Tudie says she wa'n't in on that midnight row that got young Mr. Westover so much free advertisin'. She'd only known him about a month, although it was weeks before that when he begun occupyin' a stage box and bom-

course, you won't be able to tell me what to do."

"That's right," says I. "I expect the old gent lays some of Duke's high rollin' stunts to you, eh?"

"I suppose he does," says she. "And I don't like being scolded. It isn't my fault. I didn't want Duke running after me, anyway. And I've stopped him buyin' ridiculous presents for me. To be sure, he insists on my havin' his car and all that; but it is his own money he's spending, you know. It was left to him by his grandmother, and he's bound to spend it somehow. He says so himself. So, you see—"

"Say, Miss Tremaine," I breaks in. "I expect you're makin' out a good case, all right; but what then?"

"Yes, yes," says she. "Of course I'm foolish to run on this way to a mere— By the way, Torchy, how old are you?"

"Steen," says I.

"And I'm twenty," says she. "Twenty! And Mr. Westover is waiting to give me a talking to. He's fifty, Duke says, and he's been Governor of his State, and he has millions and millions."

"Sure he has," says I. "He has his name printed on more cotton cloth than you could run your car over in a week. Didn't you ever hear of the Westover Mills?"

"Wha-a-at!" gasps Tudie, reachin' out and grabbin' me by the arm. "Are you sure, Torchy, are you sure? Is he the man who owns the Westover cotton mills? How do you know?"

"Ah, say," says I, "don't you ever read the papers? Ain't he been cuttin' his help down, and ain't there been a big strike up there, and didn't he stir things up by sayin' how if his mill hands didn't like what he paid 'em he'd run in a gang of Filipinos that would work for half as much? That's the duck, and he's some big noise, Z. K. Westover is."

"Yes, yes," says she, starin' straight over the chauffeur's head kind of batty like, and grippin' the cushion covers tight with both hands. "Westover, to be sure. Why didn't I know? So that's who his father is—Zenas Westover?"

As this seems to be a monologue she's indulgin' in, I

Continued on page 16