

## DORA WAS DIFFERENT

By Harold Melbourne.

Dora was different. That was apparent as soon as she presented herself at the manager's office. And yet she was looking for a position in the chorus, just as were the bedizened creatures all around her. Even the manager himself waxed sentimental, and compared her to a wild rose amid a cluster of orchids.

For, whereas here was Maizie in a new blue gown and new gold hair, and there was Flossie in a new green gown and new red hair, Dora's dress was old and gray and Dora's hair was of natural brown and full of waves and ringlets. The manager knew real hair when he saw it. And real beauty, too. And Dora was a beauty from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet.

"What can I do for you, young lady?" said the manager.

"Please, sir, I want to be an actress," said Dora.

"Indeed," said the manager, smiling good-naturedly. "Do you want to play Juliet, or Rosalind, or Ophelia?"

"I want to be in the chorus of the musical comedy that the newspapers say you start rehearsing today," said Dora.

"Can you sing?" said the manager.

"A little," said Dora.

"And dance?" said the manager.

"A little," said Dora.

"And what shows have you been in before?" said the manager.

"Only the amateur entertainments in Greenport, Long Island," said Dora.

"I thought so!" said the manager.

"Only I guessed Bird Center, Iowa."

"Will you give me a chance?" said Dora.

"I certainly will!" said the manager.

"What is good enough for Greenport, Long Island, may not be good enough for Broadway, New York, as a rule, but this case is the exception to prove the rule. If you look half as well 'on' as you do 'off,' you won't stay in the chorus very long. You'll become a star. Remember the prophecy of Sol Eisenberg."

"Yes, sir, I will," said Dora. "And thank you very kindly, too."

"My Gawd!" said Maizie to Flossie.

"What's the stage coming to, with city ladies crowded out by country rubes?"

"You said it!" said Flossie to Maizie.

"But I'm half inclined to wash my face and leave off my switch, and try the simple life myself."

Maizie and Flossie were both engaged, but for different reasons than those which had prompted the manager to give Dora a chance. So Maizie swung her meshbag nonchalantly and Flossie decided not to wash her face—just yet.

The chorus starter rehearsing and it developed that Dora could both sing and dance, as she had said, "a little," but that little was quite enough. Maizie and Flossie snickered at Dora's scales and giggled at Dora's steps. But Sol Eisenberg clapped his hands and said, "Very good, Greenport!"

"I can see what's coming!" said Maizie to Flossie.

"So can anyone—what ain't blind!" said Flossie to Maizie.

These two young women had found by past experience that it was bad policy to display jealousy and resentment toward especial friends of the manager, so they decided to be pleasant to the rube, or at least pretend to be.

"How long have you been in the city?" said Maizie.

"Only three days," said Dora.

"And where are you living?" said Flossie.

"At a boarding house in Forty-fourth street," said Dora.

"Well, you won't be staying there very long," said Maizie.

"No; I don't think the moral tone is what it should be," said Dora.

"My smelling salts! I faint!" gasped Flossie.

Rehearsals continued. And so did Dora. The manager often looked at her. Now and then he even spoke to her. But Dora still wore her old gray dress and her old black hat.

"He ain't giving her no clothes," said Maizie to Flossie.

"She don't know enough to ask for them," said Flossie to Maizie.

The company went out of town, and the show opened on the road. It was tried out in New Haven. The Yale boys were enthusiastic. So were the local critics. Even the real people, from Manhattan, were satisfied, so arrangements were completed and New York time was settled.

The Broadway premiere was an event. The leading lady was a famous beauty. The leading comedian had a large following. The costumes were advertised as "the limit." And the chorus was under Sol Eisenberg's personal supervision. So what more could anyone demand?

"Success," "A Hit," "A Riot," appeared all over the fences and all over the ash-cans. "The Girl of Girls" was in for a long run. Everybody was happy.

The leading lady bought a new house. The leading comedian bought a new automobile. Maizie bought a

string of fishskin pearls. Flossie bought a rhinestone pendant. But Dora wore the same old clothes and lived at the same cheap boarding house.

Maizie and Flossie decided that, after all, the manager was not going to be interested in the rube, so they did not bother to be pleasant to her, but delighted in being disagreeable. They all dressed together.

Sometimes Maizie had a friend waiting for her after the show. Sometimes

Flossie had a friend. Sometimes they both had friends at the same time and all went out together. The next day they would come back with wonderful accounts of the lobsters they had eaten and the wine they had drunk.

Sometimes they spoke of their friends as business men and sometimes as college boys, and they made up the most wonderful names for their escorts—names to suggest wealth and position. Dora took it all in, but never said a word.



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