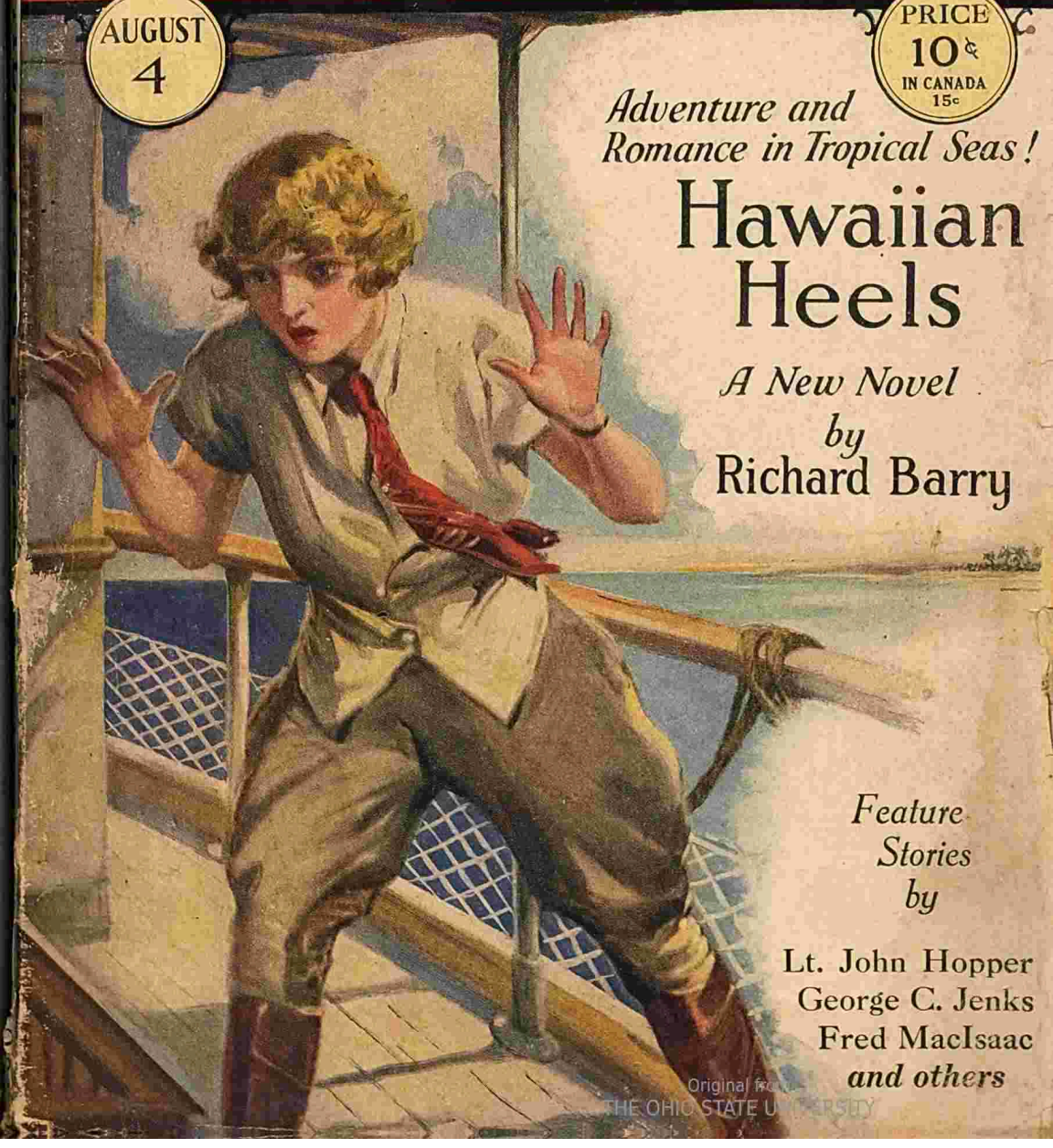
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*** START OF THE PROJECT
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Behind the scenes in a broadcasting studio which gives us a story which couldn't possibly have been written ten years ago

Applause Mail

By Oney Fred Sweet

Betty Parsons advised all persons craving a tryout on WMQZ that Henri Salzman, the program director, would be in the office after three o'clock in the afternoon. She could impart this brief information, say nothing more, and fulfill her duty, but just now there was something most attractive about the inquiring and aspiring young man on the other side of the railing that ran along in front of Betty's desk.

The young man had an instrument case under his arm, yet he was hardly the musician type, Miss Parsons thought. Surely, in his background there had been

plenty of outdoors and athletics. If looks could be broadcast, she figured he would be a microphone wow.

"Do you play?" she asked.

"And sing," he nodded.

They were alone in the office.

"I've seen a lot of 'em come and a lot of 'em go," Miss Parsons informed him out of her wisdom of six months at the office of the broadcasting station. "Whether you make good or not 'll depend on the applause mail. Take a seat on the bench there and wait for Henri. He's almost due."

The young man hadn't said anything about a partner in his act. That would probably come later.

Not wholly absorbed in the

task of sorting applause mail, Miss Parsons had a chance to study a profile that came as near to being her ideal as had come her way since gaining contact with the business world.

Take the applause mail that Betty sorted at her information desk near the entrance to the office. There were listeners-in who raved about the melodious voice of Bert Hall, the announcer. Betty knew he was married and getting bald.

There were fans that were wild about the Joy Boys and the Canoedlers, and Betty, seeing who they were and what they were “in person,” had nothing particular against them, but never had they inspired in her any emotion.

A candy bar had been named after the famous “comic strip team,” but here again, so far as Betty was concerned, familiarity had taken the edge off illusion.

“You must find the work interesting,” commented the caller.

Well, it was. But, after all, a job was just a job. It wasn’t having somebody care enough about you to want you to share with them “a little white house on a little green hill.” All afternoon the office had seemed unusually stuffy.

“Henri’s the man you’ll see,” Betty returned. “Henri and his orchestra furnish the luncheon and dinner concert music down in the Belmore Gold Room.”

She lowered her voice and

leaned forward.

"I won't introduce you right away. It's best to wait until he gets settled. He hates to deal with tryouts that 've got more persistence and pull than anything else. He was the first in the business to figure out radio technique for an orchestra. You've heard Henri Salzman's regular Wednesday night feature —'*Musical Tours to Other Lands.*'"

"Always tune in on it," the young man enthused.

He had hair that stayed in place, and he showed just the right kind of teeth when he smiled.

"Well, Henri added reed instruments and got that effect," Betty explained. "And his other

complex is applause mail. Claims it's the only way a station can tell whether a thing's 'hot' or not. Every day I and the other girls hand him the mail count. Sssh! Here he comes now!"

Henri Salzman, as he entered, was hardly the music master of tradition. True, he wielded a wicked bow, but mixed with his talent was an economic urge.

He had a habit of blinking. Within him was the struggle between art, as he knew it, and trying to visualize an audience that couldn't be seen.

It was the vagueness of the thing that gave so many of the old-timers stage fright when they got before the microphone. And no one knew better than Henri the list of "flops" that had followed

the attempts of stars in other methods of expression to reach the countless numbers seated critically at their radio sets.

"Henri."

"Yes, Betty."

"There's a young fellow here __"

"In a minute, when I go over these scores," Henri blinkingly suggested.

"Suppose you turn on the loud speaker down here now," Betty urged. "It's just about time for the finish of the home management period."

She glanced at the clock.

"I'll take him upstairs to the studio. It's something we ought to grab."

But Henri had sighted something on his desk. It was the

scenario to be used that night for compositions by MacDowell. Ed Barton, who had written the "hooey," had left space for a number that went with a description of rippling water.

It was Ed's idea to leave nothing to the imagination of the listener. And no scenario was quite complete, to Ed's way of thinking, unless the customer was given a word picture of water in the process of rippling.

"I'm going to take him upstairs," Betty interrupted. "See that the horn's working right, won't you? See that he gets the right kind of a 'break.' You know how it was when that woman from Muskegon sang for you the other day. The way the horn was working, Schumann-Heink

herself would have made you throw up your hands and ask to have it shut off."

Betty went first to the mirror at the rear of the room. The equipment there for freshening up natural beauty was complete. She was glad she had just got a swirl bob.

"Poor kid," she said to herself. "Plenty of the others who have come up here have had their press agents and managers."

She manipulated the clasp to the little railing gate and walked around to where the youth waited on the bench. He sprang eagerly to his feet and she told him to follow.

"Thing to do is just be natural," she coached in an undertone. "Don't get too close to

the microphone, and remember the boys in the amplifying room ’ll make it louder or softer. And tell all your friends to write into the station telling how ‘hot’ you were. Write a few letters to yourself. Henri says the only way he can tell about a feature is by the mail it pulls. What’s your name?”

“Huntley—Robert Huntley.”

“‘Huntley’s Half Hour of Harmony,’ we’ll call it. Gotta have a catchy title, and that’s as good as Al Somers could’ve thought of. Without the right kind of ‘hooey’ in this game you’re sunk.”

“Hooey?”

“You’ll know what I mean if you stick around,” Betty sighed.

For some reason she was half

out of breath. The elevator was slow in coming.

"Wish I could let the folks know so they could listen in," he remarked.

"Where are they?"

"Down in the southern part of the State."

"'Fraid you won't have time now."

But it was a relief to have him say "the folks" instead of the name of some sweetie.

"Darn old elevators," she complained, nervously. "All of 'em going the wrong way. Thought you weren't just off vaudeville. So many of 'em who come up for a tryout are. They hand out the line about being tired of traveling around, and tell Henri if he'll just put 'em on the air

once, the public ’ll be so crazy about ’em they’ll want to tear down the station if they ain’t kept on steady.”

“And what happens?” asked Mr. Huntley.

“Station’s never been torn down yet. There’s so many stations and so many programs. What ever gave you the idea of wanting to go on the air?”

“What made you want to work in a station?” he parried.

“Answered an ad.”

“It’s been my ambition to broadcast,” he declared wistfully, “ever since I got a radio. Musically inclined, I guess that’s what they call it. And if I could make a living at broadcasting—”

“We all have dreams,” Betty confided. “But you’re up against

something. We'll have to frame up a letter that you can read over the air. You know—some lonely sheep herder on a ranch. I could type one off. 'Dear Mr. Huntley: I want to let you know how much your music means to me 'way out here forty miles from the railroad.' That always goes strong, and it's a good puller for regular letters from folks who want to hear their names mentioned on the air. Here's the elevator!"

Station WMQZ was located on the fashionable Hotel Belmore's roof. And with frequent mention of the hotel in the announcements, the Belmore got a wonderful "break," even if all the radio artists did have to pass in and out of the marble

lobby.

Betty led the way up a final flight of stairs beyond the elevator and young Mr. Huntley, an expression on his clean-cut face of mingled awe and fear, followed with his instrument case gripped tightly under his arm.

The two studios at WMQZ were separated by the glassed-in quarters occupied by the mechanics. Plush curtains had been done away with, the plain walls being of a patent composition that took proper care of the acoustics.

A Mrs. Eleanor Jarvis was just leaving the microphone with her notes, her period devoted to tips on how to make the home more “homy” having come to a close. She bowed, patronizingly,

to Betty as she passed. Ben Morris, the assistant announcer, asked “What’s the big idea?” and Max, the lone mechanic on the job at that time of day, frowned.

“It’s O. K.,” Betty told them defiantly. “Henri ordered a special tryout.”

Sullenly Max retired to his glass booth.

“When the red light comes on,” Betty schooled her companion, “that means everything you say from then on goes on the air. When the red light switches off, you’re off. See! Wait for the red light in the little bulb there on the wall and then strut your stuff.”

He turned toward her a face that was tense and pale.

“Don’t get mike shy,” Betty

cautioned him. “There’s your microphone—number three. It’s all connected up. Go ahead and knock ’em cold.”

Betty understood. There was something ogreish about the cold, metallic little disk.

With what sort of a world did it connect up? What sort of people, here and there and out yonder, were listening? And in what mood? And what was it they cared for? And what would be their comment concerning one’s effort? If one only knew. Or was one lucky not to know?

A red glow came into the tiny bulb on the side of the wall.

One song that the nervous young man sang as he twanged his uke was called “You May Not Mean Much to the Multitude, But

You Make a Hit With Me." There had been a swarm of what might be called sentimental songs suitable to the day and age.

If Betty had any criticism to offer, it was that the youth presented the number in rather stilted fashion, but she loved the theme of the ballad. As to the voice or the accompaniment—these were matters for musicians, who really knew, to decide about.

Announcer Bert Hall came to the microphone between numbers to say in his most velvetlike tone:

"You are listening to Huntley's Half Hour of Harmony."

As Bert turned away, with the performer's back to him, he held his nose, and Betty could have slapped him for it. But Betty

knew Bert. There was but one word for all his verdicts on amateur efforts—"terrible!"

The hands of the clock on the studio wall told that it was time for the program's end. The light went out of the little red bulb. The ordeal was over.

Mr. Huntley rose limply from his chair.

"How was it?" he asked, trying to smile.

"Hot," assured Betty. "Don't worry but what it clicked."

"It was different than I thought it was going to be," he quavered. "One of my strings was a little off. Think that'll make any difference? Thought it would sound worse if I stopped to tune."

"Never correct yourself on the air," Betty advised. "I get that

motto from Bert Hall. He's got a tongue that's oiled and he flits right on. Same way with an instrument, I should think."

"Wish I knew just how my voice sounded out where it went to," he regretted.

"Nobody ever knows," she solaced him. "I'll say there's a lot of baloney about all this talk of being able to judge a person by his voice. There's a lot of people who should be heard and not seen, but that don't mean you. It's a profession, being able to register honey in your voice."

"Maybe a million people were listening in." His eyes glowed.

"Maybe."

"If I've made good," he ventured, "and get a lot of—what was it you called it?—applause

mail, I'll owe a lot to you."

She flushed and lowered her eyes. Finally she said:

"There aren't many wow musicians who come from down the State. Most of 'em who come to the rail there by my desk are foreign, and look foreign.

"It's like the song you sang. They make good with the million, maybe, but they don't mean much to me. As a rule, folks you like from down State are all right for listening in, but for the broadcasting end, 'not so good.' I —it's the first time I ever tried to push anybody onto the station."

He paused for a moment in fumbling with the snaps on his ukelele case.

"How soon," he asked, "do they put a fellow on regular?"

“Oh, soon as the public shows how it stands,” she informed. “Take Moore and Mott—they’re not only on the pay roll, but they’ve had six weeks of vaudeville—you know, fans who want to see them in person—a rake-off from their candy bars, and club dates galore.”

“That ’d be great,” he enthused. “Dad wanted me to stick with him in the store.”

They rode down together on the elevator.

“You’ll be dropping around,” she called after him as she reached her own floor. “It takes a day or two before the applause mail starts coming in.”

II.

Henri was absorbed with the leader of a Swedish Glee Club as Betty entered the office. She waited until their conversation was finished. Still, Henri had nothing to say.

"Darn you, Henri," Betty despaired, "if you forgot to tune in—"

"That's just what I did," Henri apologized. "This glee club guy came along. How was he?"

"He was—"

"I mean his program, Betty, I know all about his being a nice young man."

Miss Matthews, in charge of the filing case, tittered.

"Oh, you all give me a pain," Betty flared. "If it was some wop with black sideburns, you'd have seen he got a 'break.' I don't care

nothing about him, personally, but if you let him get away you'll be passing up a good bet."

"He's got nice eyes," Henri agreed, exasperatingly.

"And such broad shoulders," mimicked Al Somers.

Betty knew then that in her absence the whole office staff had started with its joke, and it was a bunch that could razz the life out of anybody.

"Just you wait," she demanded, "until the applause mail starts coming in."

She wished that she had not let them see that quiver to her chin.

Nor did any of them let up when, as the days passed, Huntley's Half Hour of Harmony brought in just three missives.

The station opened all fan mail unless it was plainly of a personal nature. Much of the fan mail was addressed directly to the station, and the comment covered a variety of features.

One of the three communications concerning Mr. Huntley's initial radio effort bore the postmark of a certain little town down State, and, while it spoke in glowing terms of the program, the writer, before closing, advised the entertainer to guard against gunmen and foolish flappers. In Henri's opinion, the parental touch offset the value of the applause which the document contained.

There was a second letter so filled with inside radio lingo that one of the girls posted it on the

bulletin board. When Betty, coming back from lunch, saw it there, she tore it into small bits.

And the third letter, suggesting that the genius presenting the Half Hour of Harmony be immediately “signed up,” never reached Henri’s hands. Knowing who it was from, despite the signature, Betty cherished it for its handwriting, but she credited it on her mail count without turning it in as evidence.

“Three letters,” Henri commented, sarcastically, as he scanned the daily reports. “Shows that at least he was on the air. Otherwise might have thought Max never turned on the switch for him.

It made Betty almost hate the

“unseen audience.” What was the matter with the boobs? Silence—utter silence, after a fellow had done his best.

“You talk about mail,” Betty complained to Henri and the bunch in general. “No wonder ‘Uncle Dick’ gets it from the ‘kiddies’ who want a ride on the train.” Betty talked fast when angry. “And the Miracle Quartet —don’t they beg for folks to write in for their free booklet on manicuring? You call it all applause mail. And what does Mme. Le Fleur do? I’ve heard her.”

Betty provided an imitation. “She says: ‘I’d be so pleased to learn of what your reception to my program was like.’ Knows she’ll get all the bugs who think

they’ve got the best set in the neighborhood.” Her lips tightened. “I haven’t handled the mail for six months at this studio without knowing the tricks.”

“Listen, Betty.” Henri was speaking in earnest now. She had piqued him with her criticism. “I haven’t heard this baby of yours, but if he’s got radio personality I’ll give him all the chance in the world. I see he’s crashed the gate so far as you are concerned, but you’re only one in a wide public. He goes on twice more, and if he pulls a dozen legitimate letters—I said legitimate—we’ll talk business.”

Betty faced them all with her head thrown back. “I want you all to know here and now that I don’t care anything about him, one way

or another.”

“Oh, we know that, Betty,” Henri grinned.

III.

Their taunts made it embarrassing for Betty when Mr. Huntley did show up at the office again. She left her desk and motioned to him to follow her out in the hall.

“You can’t tell much about mail,” she said consolingly. “People don’t write like they did when radio first started. They sort of take a good program for granted.”

“Wasn’t there any? Are you quite sure?” he gasped.

“Well, there was mine and yours, and the one from your ma.”

"But I told ma to sign her maiden name."

"She did," Betty assured him, "but she didn't stick to the text."

His face fell.

"Gee," he sighed, "I told the landlady out where I'm stopping that I was one of the staff artists on WMQZ. Next time I could get her to write in."

Betty shook her head.

"No, Mr. Huntley, the letters from now on have got to be honest-to-goodness. Henri can smell the phony kind clear out from where they were mailed. I've argued the other way, but the really hot feature *does* get a response that you can't mistake.

"You've got two more chances. Way the program's filled up, you've got Friday afternoon

of this week and Tuesday afternoon of next. Of course I liked your program the other day. I'd leave in that 'You May Not Mean Much to the Multitude' number, but I'll give you the address of the song pluggers, and you go over and see them."

"Wouldn't do any good," he lamented. "All the songs I know I've picked up from hearing some one else sing on the radio. Practiced on 'em a long time."

"Then you want to put more feeling into your voice," Betty advised. "Just sort o' 'ease into the mike,' as Al would say."

"Will you come up to the studio with me next time, too?"

"'Fraid I can't," she said evenly. "You see, the bunch've started to kid me a lot. They think

—well, that maybe my interest in you is just personal."

"Gee, I hope it ain't," he jerked out. Her eyes narrowed.

"You hope it ain't," she echoed, and her voice was chilled.

That was the way it was these days. A girl had to make all the lead plays. And then to no purpose.

If radio lasted, and they still needed a girl to handle applause mail at WMQZ, and she kept her health and her disposition—then she'd probably be keeping office hours, instead of managing a flat, until they carried her off to the Old Ladies' Home. In another month she'd be twenty-three.

"I'm glad you say the mail don't really count," he was saying, eager to catch at a straw.

"Fact is, it does," she answered coolly. "I might have been blind about your act being a wow."

"How come?" he inquired, innocently.

Betty bit her lip. Guess it was true, all right, about a woman being mentally beyond a young man the same age. She'd read such was the case in Fanny Fern's daily column.

"What was the name of the town you come from?" she asked, starting back for the office.

"Elderdale."

"I thought it would sound like that," she nodded, listlessly.

"Of course I'm 'going on' Friday afternoon," he called after her. "And Monday again I'll drop around for my mail."

"Do that," she called back, "but I don't think you'll need to bring along any bushel basket."

IV.

Betty's cheeks were flushed when she reached her desk again. Over and over she rehearsed the bit of dialogue:

"They think—well, that maybe my interest in you is just personal." (With tenderness.)

"Gee, I hope it ain't." (Blurted.)

What was the use?

Perfunctorily, with her red pencil, she marked the applause mail. There was the "Uncle Dick" pile, and "the Joy Boys" pile, and the "Mysterious Melody Maker" stack, and there were the

“appreciation postal cards.”

On these cards the fans painstakingly wrote down the names of features and marked each with a cross under the brackets labeled “excellent,” “good,” “fair,” “poor.”

What a host of conservatory graduates and neighborhood prodigies and church choirs had come and gone and been swallowed up by silence! Maybe a stray cross for some of them on one of the postal cards. But seldom an avalanche echo of the kind needed to open Henri’s eyes.

Betty slit envelopes with a quick slice that came from long practice. Sorted the letters as to States. Marveled at the freakish handwriting. Smiled at the strange letterheads.

Four mails a day. The late afternoon one was not so heavy. That gave time for typing excerpts, filling out reports. Dull routine work that was lightened, maybe, by munching on candy.

Visitors at the rail asking for "the man who hired the performers." German opera singers, Scandinavian, Russian. Vaudeville actors. Chautauqua lecturers. Women's club speakers. Mothers with child pianists.

Routine.

The years stretching ahead. Sorting applause mail. Going out to lunch. Coming back. Al Somers and his wisecracks at the desk. Ed Barton at his. Both ineligible.

Henri Salzman coming in at the same time each afternoon and

hanging up his umbrella. Answering the phone. Somebody you could half understand explaining in detail about having interference from station WXKP. Who cared?

The world might be divided these days between those who were wild to broadcast and those who were willing to listen in, but Betty Parsons had dreams of something else. Looked like it was just going to remain a dream.

Friday came and the hands of the clock crept toward the hour of four. Al and Ed were busy writing their “hooey” announcements. Folks believed Bert Hall thought all that stuff up at the microphone, just as he went along—mathematics, musical history, poetry and all.

Well, let 'em think so. Henri had turned on the loud speaker. There was a grind to it—had been for a long time and nobody had fixed it.

"Recognize it, Betty?" Henri called out.

They were all grinning.

Betty recognized it.

The whole bunch had dropped work to twist about in their chairs.

"Can hardly hear the uke," Henri commented, listening soberly, with trained ear.

"You can hear enough of it," chortled Al Somers.

Betty continued to sort letters. The boy hadn't anything, really, when you listened without bias. She was relieved when Henri ordered the program shut off.

Henri came over to Betty's

desk.

"I'll keep my word," he promised, not unkindly. "He gets another 'break' next Tuesday. Lacks R. P.—radio personality. But as a plumber, maybe—"

But Betty, for once, came back with no fiery retort. Just kept on sorting mail.

It was odd that most of the mail was applause mail, or nothing. The great "unseen audience" was not given to booing or hissing. If it didn't care for a thing, it simply damned by silence.

Only certain types of sopranos seemed to come in for real roastings. The average program that failed to "click" was apparently regarded as what Al Somers referred to as "just one of

those things."

V.

Young Mr. Huntley showed up at the office shortly before it was time for him to go on the air the following Tuesday afternoon.

He looked much as he had that first day when he had breezed in—the same freshness, if not quite the earlier self-confidence. And Betty, in spite of herself, experienced something of the same thrill she had felt on that first occasion.

"Thought maybe you'd go up to the studio with me," he began, hesitatingly. "It's my last time, you know—if I don't make good."

"No mail," Betty reported in

businesslike tones. “You can look at the reports. Your second program drew just three less letters than your first.”

“Didn’t ask my landlady to write,” he smiled, lamely. “I’ve been dodging her. Can’t you come up to the studio with me today? You helped me a lot that first time.”

“Guess I told you, then, all I know from a professional standpoint.”

“Just the same,” he pleaded, “I’d like to have you along. Those fellows up there in the studio didn’t make it so very easy for me. You see, they weren’t interested, like you’ve been—in my act.”

Betty got up from her desk.

The afternoon sunlight was

filtering through the portholes along the ceiling of the studio when they entered, and the far corners of the room were in soft shadows.

"Last time, ain't it?" Max, the mechanic, asked gruffly.

He made the connections for the number three microphone over by the little organ that was used for hymns, and went back to his booth.

Finally, there was the flash of the red bulb.

"Bob Huntley announcing his own Harmonious Half Hour!"

He hitched his chair closer to the microphone. There was no life in the metallic disk before him—nothing to be afraid of.

He cleared his throat and fondled the ukelele a bit. Then he

started to sing as he strummed.

Betty sat in the background.

He did have a wonderful profile! And he sure was clean looking. And, as she sat there, he went from one number to another.

“How did you like it?” he asked when the minute hand of the clock had reached the half hour’s end.

She forgot her peeve.

“I’ve liked it all along,” she answered wistfully.

“And I’ve liked you all along,” he said feelingly. “My program may be a flop, but it ain’t as if I hadn’t met you.”

A warm flood ran through her.

“I don’t know as there’s anything so wonderful about me,” she said, “but if there was anything to me, a boy like you

would bring it out. I liked you the first time I saw you. You can call me Betty."

"And you can call me Bob."

"Maybe," she went on, "it's because I couldn't see any fault in you that I couldn't see any flaws in your program. I liked your program, but I guess it's going to be crowded off the air. No applause mail."

"Maybe," he ventured, "we could go somewhere together—if dad don't want to take me back—out somewhere and run a gas filling station."

"You're strong," she admired. "There's plenty of things you can do."

"And if I did play the uke, it'd be just for you."

.....?

.....!

VI.

“Ten, eleven, twelve letters addressed to Huntley’s Half Hour of Harmony,” Betty was counting gleefully.

“No! Don’t say!” Al Somers called over from his desk, doubtingly.

“It’s a fact,” Betty announced. “And you know, with the letters just starting to come in, what that means.”

She picked up one of the missives that had arrived in a pink envelope. She slit the envelope, removed the contents.

Then, as she read, all the joy went out of her and her face became the color of the vivid

stationery:

> Your love-making episode late this afternoon was one of the most natural things ever heard on the air. The feeling in the voices was so marvelously sincere. Why can't this couple be a regular feature on WMQZ?

Crushing the communication, Betty pillowed her head in her arms and let out a wail.

"That darn Max," she sobbed. "He never shut off the microphone!"

They were crowding above her. She could hear the cruel "slit,

slit" of envelopes.

"Yes, sir," Al Somers was saying, "and every one of 'em for Huntley's Half Hour of Harmony. What kind of a stunt did he have yesterday, Betty? What you mean about Max not shutting off the microphone? No kiddin', the boy's proved a wow. Listen:

> That young love feature this afternoon was a riot. So many of those teams sound stilted, but this was something entirely novel and clever. Give us more.
>
> Have been wondering if you'd ever hit on something new. Who are Bob and

> Betty in real life? They sure had me glued to the loud speaker this afternoon. Even the kiss came in clear as a bell. If—

Betty lifted her head from her arms and let out a shriek. She shoved the whole batch of mail on the floor.

It would keep coming. This was just the first day. The fiends! The far country would be heard from later. Betty knew how the mail ran. And, at this rate, Huntley's Half Hour, Huntley's Harmony, Half Huntley's—

You wouldn't be able to stuff it in drawers to hide it. There weren't enough desk drawers. It couldn't be kept from the prying

eyes of the office bunch even if you stayed in from lunch.

The stream would have to be stopped at its source to do any good, and it was too late for that. “Thoughts unexpressed might sometimes fall back dead,” but not after they’d been spilled over the radio.

Listeners-in. Huh! Eavesdroppers, that’s what they were. If only Al and Ed and the girls and the whole office bunch were ’way out in that far country where the sheep herder was, forty miles from a railroad. If only—

And then Betty smiled as she sniffed. She had almost forgotten.

The smile continued to play about her lips even though a boy in uniform now stood at the rail with a couple of Harmony Half

Hour special delivery letters—even though Henri Salzman had just come in to hang up his umbrella.

"Mail record being broken, Henri," Al announced, rubbing his hands.

"Yeah," Henri commented. His eyebrows lifted. He was all interest.

"And by Huntley's Half Hour of Harmony."

"Don't say," Henri whistled. "You mean on his yesterday's program? Why, what's the count so far? Shows you never can tell."

Betty stood and faced them.

"You and your applause mail," she poohed. "I don't have to read it and weep."

She walked over and jammed on her hat, that fitted closely and

becomingly to her reddish swirl bob.

"I hope that gas filling station Bob buys is so far away from a microphone we can't even get static. Applause mail? Applesauce!"

Transcriber's Note

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