

The Clown Who Shot to Kill and Died for Love

It Was Just Time for
the Happy Ending
of the Love Scene
Plot On the Stage

"Yet each man kills the thing he loves,
By each let this be heard"

—Oscar Wilde.

JACK GRUBB, the giant stage carpenter and "bit" actor, who worshipped a star, tried to kill the thing he loved with a forty-five calibre blue steel revolver. He stood in the wings of the Lyric Theatre, Hamilton, Ontario, his desperate eyes on the girl who sang of Spring and apple blossoms, and pumped bullet after bullet into her chest. Then, when the thing he loved was only a heap of silk and ribbons all dappled with red, Jack Grubb killed himself. His 320 pounds of bulk crashed to the boards.

Beyond the footlights two thousand people sat stunned. They saw the flame spurt from Jack Grubb's gun, and they heard the six sharp reports. But they could not believe the quiet huddle where smoke curled, was the apple-blossom girl. Her voice still thrummed in the awful silence, trembling above the sudden harsh jangle of halted violins. It was impossible.

Then realization stung them, screaming to their feet. Tumult swept the theatre. In the midst of it the curtain fell—not only on the last number of a mere vaudeville bill, but on the climax of one of the strangest tragedies the stage has ever known, the back-scenes drama of Jack

When the
Infatuated
Behemoth
Turned It
Into a
Tragedy



Girls of the "Under the Apple Tree" Company
Miss Bartley Stands at End of Line on Right.

"Hello, Jack!" and "When'll our trunks be up, old dear?"—anything to ward off his clumsy compliments and dinner invitations.

With her room-mate, pretty little Helen Campbell, the Irish-eyed soubrette of the skit, she used to giggle for hours about her "romance."

During a week's stand in Kansas City the two girls took an apartment. Jack Grubb had one across the hall. He crooked meals for them, delivered the dishes at the door, and got only a "thank you" and a slam for his reward. Unperturbed, he did their washing—such was the abysmal adoration of the man.

"I'm sorry for him—honest! But—what can I do?"

The girls agreed with her she could do nothing. For he was only Jack Grubb, a good fellow when he didn't get nasty about the trunks; but, after all, only a stage carpenter. Helen had a future. The most envious admitted that. She would be a fool to throw herself away as Mrs. Jack Grubb.

There came a time, however, when Jack Grubb's courtship was not to be treated hilariously. He became, not a butt for laughter, but a menace.

As week after week passed, as the "Under the Apple Tree" company jumped from town to town through the Middle West, up the coast and into Canada, playing scores of vaudeville theatres, the love that was now Jack Grubb's life woke the savage in him.

Nightly, from his nook in the wings, he watched Cecile Bartley sing of Spring and apple blossoms. He saw the smiles he burned for flung to thousands; with a twist of the fingers he flooded with radiance—for the world to gloat upon—the beauty he wanted for himself alone. The more he loved her, the deeper bit his agony. And the fun poked at him, coupled

with the girl's indifference, only fed the blazing fires of jealousy.

Jack Grubb was not jealous of a man, but of a million men. Carpenter though he was, he might have pitted himself against another suitor—some sleek-haired, well-groomed college youth—had there been one at Cecile Bartley's feet. But his rival was no fair-haired boy—it was Broadway, the world, every hated audience whose applause beat up to her and lured her ambitions onward. And this thing that he could not fight baffled Jack Grubb and turned his love madness into murder madness.

The terrible resolution came to him on the night they reached Hamilton, when the news was rumored through the company that Cecile Bartley—the beauty of the chorus, the best bet of the piece—had received a telegram. It was from New York, from the biggest producer of them all. The apple-blossom girl was to have her great chance!

Grubb stopped her as she left her dressing room. One hairy hand manacled her wrist.

"Let me go, Jack!" He devoured with his eyes the girl who was powerless to struggle, yet could melt him with a glance. "Marry me, Cecile! For God's sake marry me!"

The sheer wretchedness of the man's shaking voice only frightened

her. She began to sob—laughed instead. And Jack Grubb, letting her go, made his decision. Very well, if he could not have her, she should never belong to any man. So he raged to himself that last week. The show was to close in Hamilton, the company to break up, the members to flit south and west.

Saturday would be the last night of his life when Jack Grubb would stand in the wings and watch his apple-blossom girl sing to his rival, the world. The last time he might ever see her, thrill to her smile, feel his pulses drum at the beauty of her. After that—Broadway, fame, perhaps a hundred sweethearts for Cecile Bartley; and for him, the stage carpenter, nothing but heart-gnawing memory.

His hand shook at the switchboard. Light flooded the stage. He could hear the orchestra snap into the apple-ree song, and above the melody the faint patter of hand-clapping. That would be for Cecile—she "got" them with her eyes and her smile and the winsome way of her from the instant she tripped before the footlights.

Jack Grubb's back straightened. His bloodshot eyes lifted from the switchboard and stared straight ahead past the painted corner of a side drop. Through the narrow opening he could see the line of girls, led by Cecile, dancing out of the door in the apple tree and across the stage. A hundred times he had watched them, until he knew every kick of the toe and each quirk of the shoulder. In half a minute the head of the line would be even with him and not three feet away.

Jack Grubb's right hand crawled to the hip and came away with a swift flash of cold blue that became, a second later, a streak of scarlet.

Such was the culmination of the passion that was born when Jack Grubb first set eyes on dainty Cecile Bartley—a passion that had passed through three stages, first idolatrous love, then insane jealousy, finally a blind frenzy driving him on to the tragedy that ended his life and its only gleam of romance.

They buried Grubb in Baltimore. He had shot himself three times in the heart and he died in the belief that he had killed the thing he loved, that he had triumphed at last over his rival.

But, in the hospital at Hamilton, where Cecile Bartley lay for weeks at the brink of death, they are hoping otherwise. There is more than a fighting chance, say the doctors, that the apple-blossom girl will get well, that she may yet know the day when her name will blaze on Broadway and the world will beat a path to her doorway.



Cecile Bartley, Whose Beauty and Dancing Had Just Won Her the "Open Sesame" to Broadway When the Love-Sick Stage Carpenter Shot Her. At Right, Helen Campbell, Her Chum on the Road.



Jack Grubb, Weight 320 Pounds, Who Fell Madly in Love with the Dainty Ingenue.

Grubb's mad infatuation for beautiful Cecile Bartley, the Chicago ingenue he shot to kill because Broadway called her to stardom.

For forty-five years Jack Grubb did not know what love was. A great bear of a man, he never raised his eyes from the switchboard, the property box, the pipe, the newspaper, the dull ruts of life. For all his size and hairy arms, the carpenter was like some forgotten hulk. His name fitted him—Jack Grubb.

Then, a "season" ago, in Indiana, Cecile Bartley joined the "Under the Apple Tree" company—six showgirls, prima donna, juvenile, soubrette and comedian, booked out of New York over the three-day circuit, with a peppercorn of songs and dances, half a carload of orchard scenery, costumes getting dingy under the armpits, and Jack Grubb for carpenter, stage-hand, property man and general scullion of the sketch.

The manager counted himself lucky to fill a sick girl's place with Cecile. She was a beauty—eyes like bluebells, ropes of thick black hair, peachblow complexion

and a figure lithe and rounded as a salad. Besides, she had been with Frank Tinney in "Tickle Me," and could sing and dance with any of them.

When she walked through the stage door the first night in the little Indiana town, she walked into Jack Grubb's heart. The carpenter stopped smoking to stare at her. As the fire died in his pipe, a stronger flame took hold of him. It was as though he had never seen a woman before.

The other girls kidded Cecile. "You've made a mash, dearie," they told her. "Jack Grubb—some John!"

Cecile didn't know whether to laugh or to be annoyed. No woman can witness any man's devotion and remain unmoved, but a stage carpenter—! She, who had her heart set on Broadway, who dreamed of the star's dressing room at Ziegfeld's roof, was not to be lightly won. Certainly not by a six-foot behemoth who talked in monosyllables, chewed tobacco and wiped his hands on his overalls.

She made a joke of it at first. It was