

MAFALDA

By John Goodwin

"I'm most infernally hungry!"

"Half a second, Owen," said the composer dreamily. "I think I've got the opening phrase of the overture to 'Princess of Fisher's Alley'—and by boy, it's going to be an opera time day—it will be a second 'Louise'! Listen!"

He plunged boldly into the overture and the garret filled with a melody that was like the piping of the wind in a ship's funnel stays, swelling and growing till the room rang with it.

It was a piece of scoring that could have surprised many a master musician. Gareth had composed a masterpiece, and he knew it.

"That's magnificent," said Owen. Gareth stopped. "Only fault I find with it, I can't write a lyric for that, but I've done for the first act songs, and working fitfully on those lyrics."

"You'll get it all right; there are no girls coming into this story, old man, and you will elicit your inspiration from them," Gareth looked at him painting on the easel, and his eyes lit with admiration. "That's brilliant! But I would rather you didn't waste your time over a subject like me." He tossed the score on the desk. "Brother, you remarked that you were hungry. So am I. Did we have any lunch?"

"If we did, I've forgotten it, I suppose," said Owen thoughtfully. "We're broke!"

"Pretty nearly. Unless Dad sends the dole tonight. But I have a right—don't look scared. I'm origin-

ing her on your account: she's the best facial model in London, and I want her to sit to you!"

Owen's eyes lit up, then he shook his head.

"It's against all our rules, bringing girls up here," said he. "This is our refuge from them. The arrival of girls, my dear Gareth, always complicates matters infernally. The deuce knows what will come of it. Is it the girl we often hear singing, yonder across the court?"

"That's it," "Listen!" said Gareth, raising his head. He rose and threw the easel open. Across the courtyard floated Jill's contralto clear as a silver flute, true as the note of a songbird. Gareth took his brother by the arm.

"Hear that, Owen old chap!" said he. "That is the 'Nightingale of Fisher's Alley' singing her evening hymn. I always listen for it at this hour. It's the song of a guardian angel—it's a voice in a million. I tell you, the child who is singing is going to be a great singer—one of the greatest singers of the world! You and I will write the work that is going to bring her talent before the world. Listen, old boy, that is music—real music—it's sung from the heart!"

"Abide with me; fast falls the even-tide. The darkness deepens, Lord with me abide; When other helpers fail, and comfort flee. Help of the helpless, oh abide with me."

The voice of the singer died away, and all was silent in the alley. And Owen Pembroke was silent, too.

"You are right about her voice," he said at last, and stood beside his brother at the easel. Mafalda Seaton's face suddenly appeared at the window across the court, looking up at them, laughing and impatient, a challenge in her eyes.

"Hullo!" said Gareth.

"Hullo yourself!" called Maffie.

"I thought you were coming to supper."

"We'll be with you in a tick. Jill was scared to come. But I'm bringing her along right away."

The door swung open. Mafalda led the way into the garret; she was dressed in startling tartan flannel that set off her impudent style of beauty daringly. She made her entrance with the assurance of an actress. Jill followed her timidly.

"Welcome to the robbers' cave," said Gareth. "Miss Seaton, this is Owen Pembroke, painter, lyricist, and the best brother that ever lived since Benjamin. Owen, be presented to Miss Jill Seaton, whose voice has made Fisher's alley a garden of song—and Miss Mafalda, who will one day set the teeth of all the present movie stars gnashing with envy."

Maffie moved forward. She flushed a challenging glance at Owen, and held out a slim olive hand.

"Pleased to meet you," said Maffie. "Owen Pembroke, they call you? That's not a stage name, is it? You aren't a pro?"

"No, not quite a pro," replied Owen gravely. "Only a humble dabbler of canvases."

"Will you paint me?" asked Maffie eagerly.

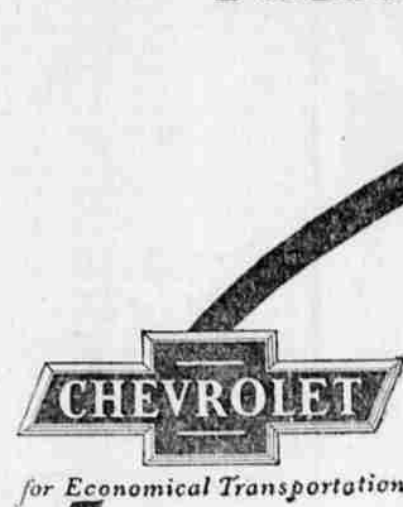
"I shall be delighted if you will sit to me," said Owen gravely, and he turned to Jill. His eyes lit up with a much deeper interest. For a moment the two looked at each other, a little shyly. Jill thought she had never seen such dark, dependable eyes in the face of a man; there was a strength and protection about Owen Pembroke that appealed to her. He shook hands with her warmly.

"I heard you singing," said he. "I thought your voice was wonderful." Jill flushed, and looked at him gratefully.

"I didn't think much of it," she said. "But your brother thinks I ought to have it trained."

"Oh, Jill's voice is all right," interrupted Maffie impatiently. "It's

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worth training. Say, what a topping spread!" she added, inspecting the feast on the table.

"Come on then," said Gareth, and in a moment the meal was in progress, to a running accompaniment of clatter and laughter.

"Jill didn't want to come till I made her," said Maffie. "Do you two boys live up here all alone?" she added, looking round the garret.

"Rather!" said Gareth, "and there isn't a paradise to beat it in all London, even when we're broke to the hilt. What do you think of it?"

"I like it. But it's the sort of muddle you'd expect two bachelors to live in."

"We are not bachelors, dear lady," said Owen. "We are wedded to our art."

"Then she don't make you much of a wife!" retorted Maffie. "Much art you two need, I bet. You're only playing at it." Then she looked at the sketch of Gareth on the easel, her eye lit up, and she gave a faint gasp.

The portrait was masterly. Owen had not merely sketched his brother's face; he had put the boy's soul down on the canvas.

"My! that's clever. Ain't it like him! And don't his eyes speak to you?" She moved a little closer to Gareth. "I'd like to have that," she murmured. "I suppose you couldn't spare it me?"

"Maffie!" protested Jill.

Gareth, flushing rather pink, laughed and glanced at his brother who nodded.

(To be continued)

Tot Learns to Handle Car From His Coaster Wagon

HOOD RIVER, Aug. 29.—Billy Rooker, six years old, was playing at the wheel of an automobile parked on a steep hill side, when it started to run away.

The lad steered the machine over a lawn trying to stop it but when

that failed to work he ran it into an oak tree.

He said he learned how to do it from steering his coaster wagon.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETS
Routine business occupied members of the board of the Bend school district and union high school district No. 2 meeting in the office of J. C. Rhodes, clerk, last night. Several matters relative to the opening of the Bend schools on September 7 were taken under consideration. Members of the board present were J. O. Gibson, J. B. Heyburn, Mrs. Horace Richards, J. C. Rhodes and

W. Ager, city superintendent of schools.

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