

TYRONE POWER (Continued)

We found something in common: we both had unusual first names that we'd been teased about as children.

Lucretia played a role that every man admires—she was a good listener. She didn't ask where I went when I didn't come to see her, or suggest we go places I couldn't afford. In fact, I never took her out and never saw her outside the restaurant. Lucretia was not beautiful, or ambitious, or foolishly romantic, or brilliant, but I kept going back to see her. She was one of the few women I've met who didn't frighten me a bit!

Two OTHER notable exceptions were actresses—Alice Faye and Katharine Cornell—both of whom helped me immeasurably.

After several seasons in Chicago I moved on to New York, still broke but determined to crash Broadway. I had with me a letter of introduction to Miss Cornell, one of the great actresses of our time.

I went to see her with fear and trembling, and found her warm, friendly, and completely disarming. She took me on as a \$30-a-week understudy, and in 1935 and '36 I played with her in "Romeo and Juliet" and in her magnificent production of Shaw's "Saint Joan."

I had discovered by this time that some important actresses refuse to work with supporting players of outstanding talent, for fear of competition. I know leading ladies who don't allow younger or prettier actresses on the stage with them. Miss Cornell, on the contrary, insisted on getting the best player possible for every part.

My experience with Katharine Cornell landed me my first film contract. I arrived in Hollywood as a green youngster of 22. My first picture assignment was a musical called "Sing, Baby, Sing," in which I played a newspaper reporter opposite Alice Faye. In the cast were veterans like Ted Healy, the Ritz Brothers, Patsy Kelly, and Adolph Menjou. When the camera started turning, these old hands threw the script out the window, ad-libbed dialogue, and cut capers all over the set. I stood there not knowing what to do or say. Finally the director took me aside and suggested I'd better sit this one out and wait for another picture to come along.

I walked off disgusted, mad at myself and at Hollywood. I intended to forget about motion pictures and go back to Broadway. Alice found me sulking over a cup of coffee in the studio commissary and asked me to have supper with her that night.

She gave me a real pep talk. "You're not a quitter," she said. "You've got what it takes to go places in pictures."

I argued that I wasn't cut out for musicals. "I think you are," she said. "Just stick around and I'll prove it to you."

Not long afterward Alice asked to have me play opposite her in "Rose of Washington Square" and "Alexander's Ragtime Band." They were two of my earliest box-office hits, and they were both musicals. It all happened because Alice Faye is a good guy, the kind who gives the other fellow a break instead of a knock. There's nothing about her to give a man the jitters.

One of my closest friends is an international airline pilot named Bob Buck, who lives in Westfield, N. J., with his wife, Jean, and their two kids. Bob is away a lot and when he comes home he's often tired. Jean doesn't bother him with questions and problems when he walks in the door. She just gets a tasty pot roast out of the oven.

I visit the Bucks often, and their home is a place any man would fly the ocean to come back to, because Jean is doing her job right. She's pretty intelligent, but she doesn't spend her time worrying about her own beauty, or her career, or proving how smart she is. She hasn't time for romantic dreams or gossip because she's too busy being a good wife. She doesn't scare me at all, and Bob, I might add, is one friend who doesn't look enviously at my bachelor penthouse.



"Rose of Washington Square" with Alice Faye, an actress who didn't scare him.



The great Katharine Cornell, another actress who helped Power, is seen here with him in play, "The Dark Is Light Enough."



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