

SYNOPSIS OF NOVEL
SUBMITTED BY
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READ BY* * *
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HOLLYWOOD MELODY

or

STAR BRIGHT

-by-

Winnefred Reeve

SYNOPSIS: Though Mavis Lee is a gay, clever, gorgeous-looking girl, she is one of hundreds in Hollywood who has parked the old companionate toothbrush in a folding apartment and is waiting for the big break. She can act. She would be a knock-out at pantomime on the screen, if only she could have a screen test. Hollywood's full of people waiting for screen tests.

In the apartment across from hers lives David Pivar, a serious young chap with the soul of a poet and a musician. He loves Mavis, but will not speak to her of love because he knows she's destined to become a star, and would only impede her progress. He doesn't like studio life. He has no desire to become a great screen figure. He's a composer. He has done some beautiful things, the true worth of which Mavis realizes, but his nature is not in the least aggressive, and he doesn't even try to put himself over.

One day on the set, Mavis succeeds in attracting the attention of Victor Blanton, a producer whose word in Hollywood was law. He is married, has several mistresses, is keeping no end of young girls who want to get on and are willing to play the game, but he forgets them all when he meets Mavis. He rushes her for weeks, gives her a lead, dines and wines her every night but still she remains true to David. Of course David is depressed by her good fortune because he realizes that she is being farther removed from him.

The day that Victor Blanton gives Mavis her contract, calling for \$2500 a week, she throws her arms about his neck and kisses him. As luck would have it, David sees this embrace. When she comes back drunk two nights later from a party at Blanton's, David sees her, packs his effects, and moves out. While she was drunk, she had told Blanton of her love for David, and Blanton, being quite human, fires David from the studio the next day. He disappears and Mavis has no idea where to find him.

So she buries herself in work, and as a safety-valve, starts going to Hollywood parties. At first they're a recreation, but later become a habit. She goes completely Hollywood. She can't live without liquor. It begins to tell on her and her work. Eventually she

HOLLYWOOD MELODY, Con't.

Page 2.

collapses and is taken to a hospital.

When she is convalescing, Blanton comes to see her. He is genuinely interested, not only in the girl, but in the artist. Together they plan a super, sound production, which will feature Mavis, and bring her back to the screen as the lovable comedienne which first won the hearts of her fans. Mavis shows Victor some of David's music, which she had kept. The producer thinks it very unusual, and plans to incorporate it in Mavis' new story. As soon as she can be up and about, she starts work on the picture.

At the premiere of "Hollywood Melody", Mavis, who is with Blanton, sees David, for the first time in many months. The long agony of their separation is wiped out in a long, burning glance, and each has the feeling that now that they have found one another, they will never lose each other again. The Picture is a sensation. David's music is a sensation. Mavis is a sensation. But, Blanton gets screen credit for David's music. As Mavis leaves the theater, she sees David, crushed, and his angry eyes seem to call her a cheat. She is furious at Blanton.

He has gone on to his home to entertain some friends. Mavis drives far into the night, until she imagines that Blanton's guests have gone. Then she goes to his house. She enters his bedroom off the patio, in the dark stumbles over something on the floor. It is Blanton's body. She screams and faints.

Police find her in rather a compromising position when they are summoned by the servants the following morning. No one will believe but what Mavis murdered Blanton. Her fame becomes notoriety overnight, and she is completely crushed. Everywhere she goes for work, producers give her the cold shoulder - - though its rather baffling how she could look for work when she's the chief suspect in a sensational murder case. - - - Exhibitors withdraw all pictures starring Mavis Lee, and she's just a professional outcast, who has to sell her house, cars and clothes to eat.

Blanton's death remains a mystery, but he made on beau geste before he died. He wrote a note swearing that the music used in "Hollywood Melody" was written by David Pivar. As a consequence, David, becomes a musical director at one of the larger sound studios.

A year later, in a projection room, David is sitting with a group of official listening to voice double tests. He recognizes one of them as Mavis'. He asks who owns the voice and is directed to an extra, a little old woman. There's something familiar about the little hunched figure. David follows her into traffic, and on to a bus. Flinging himself into a seat beside her, he murmurs her name. It is Mavis, made up as an old woman so that she will be recognized in none of the studios. The gray wig, the artificial wrinkles, the dark glasses all conceal the same dear Mavis whom David had known in the dingy little side-street apartment, and they both go home together.

SC

HOLLYWOOD MELODY, Con't.
Page 3

COMMENT: Hollywood's looseness has been widely publicized in both celluloid and print, and I do not think it necessary to deliberately draw attention to the well-known lax ways to the film colony by endorsing this story for a picture. A big star is believed to murder her lover, the man who made her in pictures, and that sort of thing is rather bad form on the screen. The plot is most synthetically worked out, and the characters are frightfully stereotyped.

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Synopsis outline:

HOLLYWOOD MELODY
or
STAR BRIGHT

A novel of 80,000 words, now in revision.

Author: ONOTO WATANNA -- Winnifred Reeve.

HOLLYWOOD MELODY

Theme:

This is a story of Hollywood--the Hollywood of multihued lights and hungry shadows. The Hollywood of tinsel joys and transient triumphs; of tender, prodigal, passionate hearts. It is the story of a Movie Butterfly, who became a Bright Star, the Darling of the World, and who at the peak of her fame was pilloried by the press and public opinion. It is the story of a youth, whose dreams rose above the miniature piano he played on a Movie set, and who dreamed of embracing in a musical composition the spirit and the soul---the heart---the MELODY OF HOLLYWOOD .

The novel opens in a typical Hollywood bungalow court--a second rate cheap affair. All of the tenants were in the Movies, or in some way or another connected with them.

In one of the bungalows three girls eked out a living, by working as extras--when they could get work.

There was Adeline, a slangy, thin girl, who turned a hard boiled front to a hard boiled world, to conceal the real mother heart within her.

There was Anita, a constitutional liar---the sort that

lies about small and large things, who was pretty as a kitten² and who sexed her way through life.

Then there was MAVIS LEE.

Mavis was a wild hearted, loveable, immensely talent-
ed girl. A Mabel Normand type. A champagne personality.
Passing through life laughing, clowning dancing, throwing her-
self away. Excitement and movement were the breath of
life to Mavis. A child of nature. ~~xxqixk~~ A quicksilver
personality.

Across the court in a tiny bungalow was David Pivar,
a musician on a Movie lot. David was the antithesis in type
to Mavis. He was a dreamer, and as moody as she was gay.
Yet these two loved each other. David held back telling
Mavis of his love, much as she tried to entrap him into speak-
ing, for he wanted to do something that would make him worthy
of the girl. So he poured out his heart in his musical com-
positions---lyrics for the most part.

These two youngsters found their pleasures in
walks about Hollywood, or in David's antique Ford. They
would be part of the great throng behind the ropes on the
night of a premiere. Mavis even hung outside the Montmartre
Cafe, to watch the stars go in and out.

She had a natural gift for comedy. An irrepressible
talent for clowning, and her antics were often so funny that
people laughed at her against their will---laughed and loved her.

Then one day Victor Blanton, a Producer, saw
Mavis on a set when a certain super picture was being shot.

Mavis had gotten into trouble by knocking over a prop, and now

she was trying to wheedle her way into the good graces of the irate assistant director who was bawling her out. The somewhat edified Blanton strolled over, and Mavis gave him a beautifully candid wink. He interceded for Mavis. They had a little talk, Blanton appraising and against his will intrigued by the girl. The result was ~~hm~~ a test on the following day for Mavis.

The days that followed were thrilling ones for Mavis. With the favor of Blanton, and her own inimitable gift, she rose rapidly. During this time she had several quarrels with David. She ~~tried~~ to coax him to propose to her, and finally deliberately asked him. "Lets you and I get married". His reply was rough. He did'nt intend to be Mr.Mavis Lee.

Mavis had little enough time for him, but she never failed to rush in to tell him the gorgeous news of the day, for events were leaping along for her in the Movie world. And with her climb, David crept more and more into his shell. Meanwhile, Mavis secured an important part--the lead in fact in a picture, and with \$200. a week, she thought she was a millionaire. She flew out to the stores, bought everything in sight, flung her money right and left and opened accounts in several stores.

David told himself he was glad to see her succeed, but he began to realize that she was soaring beyond him.

With the showing in the projection room, of the picture, it was immediately perceived that Mavis was a great find. Blanton, who in spite of his numerous affairs with women,

a wife somewhere or other, a mistress &c. and girls he was keeping either from kindness of heart or a transient passion, was in love with Mavis---the first real love of his life. But Mavis thought only of David---David, pig headed and stubborn---now always so remote and withdrawn from her. However, the days were too full to bother much over the sulky David, and Mavis was lightheaded and a natural joy-child.

Everything her little heart could desire, Blanton saw to it that she had. They went rounds. Parties, dances, drinking-----so forth and so on. Mavis was a Wampas ~~xxxxx~~ baby star. She made her personal appearances she acquired a fan following &c.

Then came the glorious day, when Blanton held above her head just beyond her reach her first contract--a very big contract. He told her he had a "price" for it. This was just a joking matter. O.K. She would pay the price. The price was a kiss. She was in his arms.

There was the bang down of a piano top. David passed, unseen by them.

Mavis flew home, literally on air, rushed into David's bungalow, waving her contract. He stared at her. She cried :

"Look! Look! David---my contract".

He glared at her with hatred.

"I know the price you paid for that" he said.

"Whattt!"

"Oh yes. Don't try and pull any of that baby stuff to me. I saw you in Blanton's arms---saw him kiss you".

"Well what of it? You know as well as I do a kiss means nothing in this game. Everybody does it. You know very well----"

"I know very well we speak a different language".

The quarrel grew in bitterness. Mavis flung out, saying she hated him. Then a moment later she thrust in her head to say:

"Don't believe a word I say. I'm an awful liar".

But she went off that night for another party with Blanton. David sat up all night. He saw her come in toward dawn. Mavis was drunk.

Mavis had confided to Blanton her feelings for David. The latter masked his feelings, and promised to help David get some good berth at the Filmo. Company. But he managed the following day to have the boy let out. When Mavis tapped on David's door, on a repentant quest, she found it empty. David and his old piano were gone. Adeline gave her a bundle David had left. It was his music---songs composed by David. Movie Moths and Butterflies; The World is Mine, Hollywood Melody and so forth. Consumed with longing for him, Mavis went to the studio and was told he had quit.

For a time she was inconsolable, but her work

took so much of her time and thought. She embarked moreover upon a dissipated, reckless career.

She bought expensive cars, and ~~exaggerated~~ from Paradise Court she went first to a gaudy little ~~fix~~ apartment, with its cheap futuristic flashy furnishings, and from ther to a very ornate and elegant house of polyglot architecture bathing pools &c.

Here she lived on the crest of the wave. She was becoming more careless and wilder. Her friends were the hosts of parasites that seem to flutter always around a movie celebrity. Her black maid called her a Honey Child, because people came around her like flies to the honey pot; but when the honey would be gone, then the flies too would go.

Meanwhile her fame grew. She was considered the best comedienne in the country. A real star, in every sense of the word.

No matter how much money she made, she spent more. With a salary of \$2500. a week, she bought a \$75,000. house and a Rolls Royce car. She was always in debt, always giving her money to others. Her hordes of dependents preyed upon her &c.

Meanwhile the drink habit was fastening upon her. She began to break. Her hands would tremble. She would break into hysterical laughter. One night she saw things.

Meanwhile also a whispering campaign of slander was circulating through the Movie City, and stealing out to New York and over the country. Her name became a byword. In spite of her fame, people thought of her as one addicted to wild parties and dissipations, and the stories grew like a rolling snowball.

Note: I realize that all this is not for picture use. Nevertheless it is in the novel. An important and integral part of my story.

Mavis goes to see a famous alienist. He tells her ~~xxx~~ that she is somewhat psychopathic. She did not know the meaning of the word. Found it in the dictionary. And was furious. She threw another party. The alienist had advised her to run away from her environment. Mavis retorted that you cannot run away from yourself. She went to her little bungalow at Malibu Beach---but the stillness and quiet of the place got upon her nerves. At night she imagined things were following her, and one day she struck a dog, who wailed at her door. A collapse followed, and she was taken to the hospital.

(I have some immense chapters on this phase, but it is not Movie material, though great for my novel)

While sick, Blanton comes to see her. She tells him that if she only knew where David was--if she could but see him, she would be a changed girl. David was always back of her mind. Blanton, who is at bottom a good sort ~~intxxxxxx~~ promises to do what he can to locate David, and Mavis tells him of David's music.

She has the music with her³ Blanton, who is himself somewhat of a connoisseur on music, looks it over. He tells Mavis he believes they can use it in a picture they are about to produce. Sound pictures have now come in. Music is more and more in demand.

Mavis feels new life and ambition. ~~Shex~~ After leaving the hospital, she retired to Malibou, and there she and Blanton whip David's music into shape. She thr ws herself heart and soul into the work. No more booze---no more parties. She lives for but one thing-----to see David's music put across.

The picture goes into production. Mavis is great and big enough to be satisfied to subordinate her own talent for the good of the picture. She wants everything to depend on David's music.

The Premiere of Hollywood Melody.

This time Mavis is not behind the ropes---we see the celebrities pouring in, beautifully dressed &c. and Mavis the star of them all. As she goes in on the arm of Blanton thinking the throng are all admiring her, we catch bits of their excited talk. ~~Shexixxtax~~ ~~Nstx~~ Though they admit her beauty and talent, everyone is whispering how fast she is &c &c. (I've the dialogue in the novel)

Mavis is the center of attraction. She is radiantly happy---blissfully so, when suddenly she sees across the aisle David. She stands up---wants to go to him, and he

smiles gravely across at her.

But music is now flooding the theatre---David's music. The dreamy eyes of the musician look across at Mavis. He begins to realize what she is doing for him and his heart is full to overflowing.

Then the theatre is darkened, and the picture is begun. Millions of butterflies seem fluttering over the screen. These come flying toward the cameras and as they come they turn into the faces of girls---Movie Butterflies-- till there is finally the one girl Mavis----- This is just a bit of imagery, preceding the title sheets.

And now the title sheet is being shown, and Mavis receives the shock of her life, for the credit for the music and lyrics is given not to David but to Blanton.

She is nearly distracted. Blanton tries to reassure her. Tells her it is some error at the studio, but Mavis insists she must go to David---David----and in the intermission she tries to reach him----but all she can see is the boy's shoulders drooped and hunched like an old man's, David's dropped head, as though he had received a death thrust.

Then with the outpouring of the throngs, and people crushing to congratulate her Mavis makes the motions with her arms of a swimmer, as she tries to make way through the crowd.

"David! David!" she cries, and plucks his sleeve. He gives her a deep, dark look, and says the one

word:

Thief!

He pushes his way out.

Blindly Mavis turns back. Someone~~one~~ has her arm-- is guiding her. She realizes it is Blanton. She turns on him in a fury, and regardless of who hears her, of the sensation she is making she cries:

"Don't touch me! I hate you! I hate you! I wish you were dead!"

She breaks away, and pushes through the throng, and on to the door.

"Get me a taxi" she says to man at door.

To Taxi man she says:

"Drive me anywhere---keep on driving".

All that night she drives, till about four in the morning, when the clouds begin to clear a bit from her mind. She decidew to go to Blanton--to have it out with him--to d mand the rest of David's music.

At Blanton's Villa, in a place somewhat like Garden of Alla, she ~~finds~~ receives no answer to her knocking. Going to the patio, she finds the window to his bedroom open-- a curtain blowing out. She climbs in. Feeling for the light, her foot touches something soft on floor. A horror sweeps over her. She tries to get back to window, trips on the rug, and falls over a body. She screams like one gone mad.

Then faints over the body.

Her screams have aroused people in the court. There is a rush from every direction---and the chauffeur who had waited for her outside, hammers on door.

Finally the door is broken down. A search of the villa, and in the man's bed room, Mavis is discovered in a swoon, over the body of Blanton.

The following day, from one end of the country to the other, the sensational story of Mavis Lee appears in the newspapers. She is pilloried. Regardless of whether she had murdered Blanton or not, before she has been tried, or the circumstances sifted, she is cruelly adjudged by public opinion. Overnight her fame has become notoriety. No one recalls her beautiful hobbled way on the screen; her loveable personality the hours of laughter and entertainment she has given them. She is a bad woman. A woman found in a man's room &c. Blanton was a married man and so forth.

Appisoner in her own-house, held as a witness, for the Coroner's Inquest, her place surrounded by reporters and curious she crouches in her bed.

An enterprising young reporter gets into the place over the roof, and via a little balcony. There Mavis cries:

"What do you want?"

He says he is a friend who has come to help her.

No one ever needed help more than she. He explains that he represents millions of people who wish to hear her

story . In her rage at discovering he is just a reporter she leaps out of bed, flinging anything and everything within reach at him. He flees. Comes out front door. Intimates he has had exclusive interview. Next day a fantastic story of a so-called personal and exclusive interview with the alleged murderess.

There is a Coroner's Inquest, into which I will not go here. The testimony of the chauffeur and a woman tenant give Mavis an alibi. Incontestable.

The ordeal has been a frightful one. Mobs besiege the place. Outside they cannot get through hardly. She is nearly frantic with fear. Her lawyer gets her away somehow, advises her to go to Malibu. At Malibu, her car speeds by, for she sees reporters waiting there for her. It is now night. Farther up the beach she bids her chauffeur let her out. He is to return to the city. She will telephone later.

She goes out on the beach, lies on the sand. At five o'clock in the morning she wakes with the seagulls and the clamoring ~~gxxxx~~ wild geese. Seems as if earth and sky are merged one. She feels part, of the great all encompassing universe. She takes off her shoes---walks across the sands--and thus she arrives at her home, unseen by the reporters, and slipping in at back with a latchkey.

Her star now is in the complete descendant.

The company she had worked for tell her the demand of the exhibitors is such that her picture be withdrawn that they dare not release

it. They point out the morals clause in her contract &c. In a flame of resentment she scoffs at them---repudiates the contract. Declares all the companies are after her &c.

(Omitted to mention and important detail hwre.

It was discovered after Blanton's death, that his last act on earth was a note he had written, ~~xxxixing~~ stressing the mistake made by someone at the studio, and giving full credit to David Pivar)

Mavis is astonished to find that the attitude of other companies is adverse to her. No one can take a chance on her. She is taboo. This is not the fault of the producers, but the demand and condemnation of the public itself, who have stamped upon their former idol.

Gradually she disposes of everything she has to pay her debts. She is right up against it. She does finally sign a contract to play in a picture, ~~pkxomx~~ the producer being new to Hollywood. Three days after it goes into production she discovers it is one of those hideous pathological things, of the sort where cards must go up: "For men only" or "For women only".

She refuses to go on. The suave producer puts a double in her place, but the disgusting picture is released as if Mavis were the star. This is the last straw, and Mavis disappears.

Time heals all our wounds it is said. The mystery of Blanton's death is not cleared. Mavis's story occasionally peters out in the newspapers, but in a year or so it is a dead

issue. Then one day there came to Hollywood a famous psychologist and writer. He is doing a series of articles for a ~~xxxxxx~~ national magazine on the subject of Famous Murders and Mysteries. This man lives very quietly, but he is on the scientific systematic trail of the history of Mavis Lee.

In due time there appears in the magazine an article with the title:

WHERE IS MAVIS LEE?

What has become of that bright spirit &c.

Public conscience is a peculiar thing. This article somehow strikes home. Club women and others over the country, fans &c. begin writing to the papers, demanding the return of Mavis. This article had turned a magnifying searchlight upon the little formerly radiant star, and revealed her not as the hardened dissipated notorious person, but as a loveable, beautiful prodigal soul and moreover it had cleared up her innocent connection with Blanton.

This man also has approached David Pivar now musical director for a big company. David tells him he has searched everywhere for Mavis.

One day, in a projection room, David sits with a group of officials listening to several voices that are to double for some star. Suddenly he sits up erectly. A ~~xxxxxx~~ low,

throaty, husky contralto is stealing through the room.

Only one person could sing like that--Mavis!

He demands to know whose voice that is. One of the men answers: "A little old woman- ---just an extra".

Later, the same man points "the little old woman" out to him as she is passing through the gates. Something about the way she lifted her head recalled Mavis to him. He becomes electrified, and rushes after her. Unmindful of trucks and cars on all sides, he barely reaches the bus into which she has climbed and which is now moving. He sits down beside her. He sees that grey hair is a wig. Mavis has been earning her living as an old woman. He speaks her name. She trembles. Shakes her head---declares he is making a mistake. He pleads--begs-- They get off the bus. She tries to hurry ahead of him. He lets her think she has eluded him; but presently he sees her---she is turning in to Paradise Court---the court where first they had met. Just as she pauses at the stoop of her house, David steps up. Again he calls her-----she shakes her head. Her face turns against the door. She begins to sob. David puts his arms around her--- lifts the wig from her head--the dark glasses from her eyes---wipes the artificial wrinkles--the makeup. Then he kisses her. She relaxes in his arms.