

The Girl in the Tutu

*(Or The Villain Kept
Her on Her Toes)*

By Eddie Cope and Carl Williams

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Here's a fast-moving, fun-filled play that mixes melodramatics with show business. A young, handsome theatre student (the hero, of course!) tries to assemble a dance act to save his parents' failing restaurant in the Gold Country of Old Californy. But a crooked con-man shows up with three clumsy dancing girls and a scheme to take over the café by plotting murder and cheating two old prospectors out of their newly re-found "lost" goldmine. One of the old guys is the father of a beautiful and talented ballet dancer (our lovely heroine!) who gets caught up in the mayhem. The play features a wacky cast, plenty of action, and side-splitting humor.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 6 w)

BEN (PA) NUGGETT: Grizzled former prospector, 50s.

MA NUGGETT: His wife, restaurant owner, 50s.

SONNY NUGGETT: Their son, handsome, neat dresser, 20s.

DILLY: Local bumpkin, poorly dressed, 20s.

POOCH: Local bumpkin, poorly dressed, 20s.

COLONEL QUESTUS QUANTRELL: Shady showman, 40s.

MONDAY: Quantrell's "daughter," 20s.

WEDNESDAY: Quantrell's "daughter," 20s.

FRIDAY: Quantrell's "daughter," 20s.

FRED SLINE: Gold prospector, 50s.

CORA SLINE: His daughter, attractive, 20s.

LYDIA O. LYDIA: Over the hill, painted-up entertainer, 40s.

Production Note:

The authors invite the director to insert local references (names, places) at his or her choosing.

The Girl in the Tutu

-4-

SETTING

A run-down restaurant in Slippery Rock, California, 1899. Sparse, but neat. At least one table has a white tablecloth. There is a door left to street, a door right to kitchen, a door UC to living quarters. There is also a small platform upstage left.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act I

Scene 1: Late morning, Nuggett Restaurant.

Scene 2: Later that afternoon.

Act II

Scene 1: Moments later.

PROPS

Sign that reads, "Dancers Wanted."

(3) Pistols

(3) Holsters

Carpetbag

Pocket watch

Letter and map

Tutu for Cora

Suitcase

Chicken leg

Biscuit

Cast-iron skillet

Coins

SOUND EFFECTS

Stagecoach arriving

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: PA NUGGETT stands, slamming his fist on a table.)

PA: Just looky here at this place! Coming on toward lunchtime and not a single customer! Dad-blast it! Dad-gum it! Dad-nab it! *(Stops, grabs HIS chest, sinks into chair, groaning.)* Help! Helllp!

(MA NUGGETT ENTERS from right in dowdy housedress and apron.)

MA: Can't you see I'm busy in the kitchen?

PA: *(Gasps.)* My ticker. I need one of my heart pills.

MA: We don't have any. Druggist cut off our credit because we're so far behind.

PA: That's where I'd like to kick him.

MA: Every time I turn around, you're having one of your spells. Trouble with you is, you've got Dunlap's Disease.

PA: Dunlap's Disease? What's that?

MA: Your stomach done laps over your belt.

PA: Never you mind. *(Works HIMSELF into a frenzy.)* I'm sick, I tell you. Sick! Anything could happen to me.

MA: Now don't go getting yourself all worked up. You ought to be in a good mood, seein' our boy's coming home this morning.

PA: 'Bout time he got a little sense.

MA: That'll be enough of that. He's leaving school to come help us out.

PA: You're the one who let him go off to Frisco to study how to be a dancer. *(PA gets up to do a little dance step, but the effort is too much for him. He falls back into his chair.)*

MA: Our Sonny's a good boy, and I'm proud of him.

PA: Hah! He should've gone into something that was good for somethin' -- like boxing or wrestling or football --

The Girl in the Tutu

-6-

(SOUND of a stagecoach arriving offstage.)

MA: That's the morning stagecoach. Sonny should be on it.

PA: He left on a stage, and now he's come back on a stage,
right where he set out from -- in Slippery Rock, California.

Shows he had no business leaving in the first place.

MA: Don't matter about the first place when this place is the
last place.

*(SONNY ENTERS from left in a suit, carrying a large
carpetbag.)*

SONNY: Hello, everybody! I'm home!

MA: *(Hugs HIM.)* My boy!

(PA makes a weak, derisive gesture.)

SONNY: I've missed you. *(Pulls away to shake hands with
PA.)* Pa! Good to see you.

PA: *(Pushes HIMSELF out of chair.)* I half expected you to
come through the door on tippy-toes. *(Awkwardly
demonstrates, nearly falls over.)*

SONNY: I came back to save the family business, not to be
made fun of.

MA: Sonny, you wrote that you had a great idea to attract
customers. Want to tell us about it?

SONNY: Sure do. Wait'll you see the sign I made. *(SONNY
takes a sign out of the carpetbag, with the sign's lettered
side turned away from the audience.)*

PA: A blank sign! That's stupid.

MA: Pa!

PA: Even an old prospector like me knows you can't perk up
business with a blank sign.

MA: Hush!

SONNY: You have to give the public a reason to patronize
your establishment. Entertainment! I learned that in San
Francisco.

PA: Listen, you young idiot. People come here to eat your
Ma's good home cooking, not to see a dog and pony show.

The Girl in the Tutu

-7-

SONNY: What people? *(Indicates the empty tables.)*

PA: Wel-I-I-I ... it's early. Maybe later. Shucks, business is so bad even the cockroaches deserted us.

SONNY: I'm trying to help, Pa. Please listen to me.

PA: *(Grudging.)* Don't have nothing else to do. Make it quick.

MA: You take all the time you want.

SONNY: I want to put in a dancing act. As the posters would say -- "Ten beautiful girls. Ten!" Well, maybe five. Draped in flags of all nations! And right in the middle, posing like the Statue of Liberty, will be the most beautiful girl of all! *(Makes a Statue of Liberty pose.)*

PA: Who, you? *(Laughs uproariously.)*

MA: Pa, lay off the boy.

PA: *(Still laughing.)* I can't help it. Besides, the doctor said laughing is good for me.

SONNY: Guess you don't think much of my idea.

MA: Never mind him. What's this sign you brought?

SONNY: *(Depressed.)* What good would it do to show it?

MA: We want to see it.

SONNY: I'm sorry I brought it.

(SONNY holds up a sign that reads, "Dancers Wanted." MA takes the sign.)

MA: "Dancers wanted." Let me put it in the front window.

PA: *(Grabs sign.)* Oh, no you don't.

(MA and PA have a tug-of-war with the sign.)

MA: Oh, yes I do.

PA: I won't let you.

MA: Oh, yes you will.

PA: Over my dead --

(PA coughs violently and holds his heart while MA wrenches the sign away.)

SONNY: *(Concerned.)* What's the matter?

End of Freeview

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