

Broadway Jones

From the Play of
George M. Cohan

By
EDWARD MARSHALL

With Photographs from Scenes in the Play

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Jackson Jones, nicknamed "Broadway," because of his continual glorification of New York's great thoroughfares, is anxious to get away from his home town of Jonesville. Abner Jones, his uncle, is very angry because Broadway refuses to settle down and take a place in the gum factory in which he succeeded to his father's interest.

CHAPTER II—Judge Spotswood informs Broadway that \$250,000 left him by his father is at his disposal. Broadway makes record time in heading for his favorite street in New York.

"Consider you my lawyer, Judge? Of course you are my lawyer. Weren't you my father's lawyer?"

"Not always; I did not draw his will, for instance. And in other things your uncle—well, if your father had but listened, as I hope you'll listen, his brother Abner never would have—"

"Sure! I know. And you've already been my lawyer. Didn't you get me out of jail there in New Haven? Imagine being locked up in New Haven! And I'd only dropped a melon from the window. If the chief of police happened to be going by, was that my fault? I'd have eaten the melon if it hadn't been so spoiled. And still they locked me up! They made a criminal of me! It's bad enough to be a criminal, but to be a criminal imprisoned in New Haven—heavens! Suppose a man should be locked up in Jonesville! Why, he'd die of shame."

"Well, if you accept me as your lawyer, when your uncle asks you to sell out your interest in the Jones Gum company you will refuse. When you do that, he'll try to blind you not to sell out to the trust as long as you both live. I hope you'll never sell out to the trust, but don't sign any papers, Jackson, although you know what the trust purchase of the factory would mean to Jonesville—and to all of us."

"I'll not sell out to the trust, Judge, but if my uncle—"

"He'll not offer you a fair price. He'll want to get a bargain. And remember that the company will get richer every year."

"But the trust may bust it."



Broadway Jones.

"I hope you'll take that chance, my boy, rather than ever be a party to ruining the old home town."

"All right, Judge. I won't sell to Uncle Abner—anyway, just now. I won't need the money. There's enough coming to me to keep me busy for a while."

"Jackson, I wish you might feel differently about the starting of your life as a grown man. If you could cultivate a feeling of responsibility—"

"It bores me. I could never even spell it."

"I'm afraid it does, Jackson, and that worries me. But—"

"You'll come to New York, some time, and—"

"Jackson, I'm afraid I shall."

"And keep it secret that we're either one of us from Jonesville."

"Jackson," said the Judge, reprovingly, "you'd better get along toward home. And don't think too much about those lights. Broadway, like every other street, is safer in the daytime, before the lights are lit."

"The lights are Broadway's eyes," said the young man. "Until they're lit, Broadway is asleep, and you see only men and women on it."

"And what do you see later?"

"You can search me for the name. But they're several degrees beyond mere men and women."

After he had left the Judge, Jackson found it quite impossible to go sedately home, as he might possibly have done on almost any other night. He often went to bed in Jonesville, he explained upon occasion, because he could not bear to stay awake there. He said it made him feel ashamed. Back of Whipple's drug store was the unofficial clubroom of the gayer youth of Jonesville, who demanded something less sordid than the two grim saloons or the tavern barroom. To the drug store Broadway retreated.

He found it more than usually animated. While he had been in the seclusion of Judge Spotswood's study one of the rare, dramatic episodes which Jonesville ever knew had come to pass—being imported from the outer world, of course. A touring car had taken at too high a speed a "thank ye ma'am" provided by the town authorities for the purpose of re-



Judge Spotswood.

tarding motorists who endeavored to escape from deputy sheriffs. The result had been that the car's occupants had left it without intention, gone upward, cleaving the night air to heights, and, coming down, had found themselves almost simultaneously in a mud-hole and a deputy's custody.

Having paid their fines for speeding and rescued their somewhat battered motor, they now were being bandaged. It was characteristic of the general state of Jonesville's mind that the visitors had first been fined; repairs for their bruised heads being looked at as a secondary matter.

The unfortunates numbered two, and they had told the smiling and exultant Judge of the peace that they were son and father, giving their names as Grover and Robert Wallace. Robert Wallace was of not much more than Jackson's age.

The drug store crowd was listening with huge delight to their subdued expressions of wrath. But with Broadway's entrance the younger of the victims recognized a member of his own indefinable fraternity. Within two minutes the young men were "old chap" to each other, which is a congenial sign.

"How's your machine?" asked Broadway.

"Haven't looked it over very carefully."

"If it's out of business, I'll get my runabout and tow you ten miles down the road. There's a good hotel there, and a repair man who knows his business could help you out the first thing in the morning."

No such service proved to be necessary. In fact the stranger's car was in such unexpectedly good condition that its owners insisted upon taking Broadway with them to his gateway. They reached it simultaneously with Clara Spotswood and Josie Richards, who were now engaged in that inefficient but delightful see-sawing which frequently occurs when a girl-friend takes a girl-friend home. Clara had walked home with Josie, Josie had walked part way home with Clara, Clara had gone part way back with her. They had gradually come almost to a midway standstill in front of the Jones place.

While the elder Wallace took advantage of the halt to make one more examination of the car, before plunging into the darkness of the surrounding farming country, Jackson introduced his new-made friend to the two girls, and they stood laughing inconspicuously. The young city man was much impressed by the two pretty country girls, especially Clara Spotswood, who had been brought so dramatically to their attention.

They went along before the elder gentleman was satisfied that everything was certainly all right, but at a distance which they felt sure made them invisible in the soft gloom of the summer night they paused, with many a suppressed giggle, to look back at the group, each member of which was now and then shown sharply against the background of Cimmerian darkness as he chanced to pass into the radius of one or the other of the car's headlights.

"I think he's absolutely too handsome!" Clara whispered cautiously.

"I've always thought so," Josie answered.

"Oh, silly! I mean young Mr. Wallace. And Robert's such a sweet name! It's almost the same as 'Robin'—Robin Adair, you know? How she must have loved him!"

"Robert or Robin?" Josie asked.

"Robin, of course. She sang the song about him. But Robert's just so pretty, and it doesn't make you think of birds and worms."

Josie burst into partially stifled sitters, and her friend grasped her arm in giggling wrath to force her into a wild scamper down the dusky, fragrant village street. When they had once more fallen to a walk, Josie remarked, unwittingly:

"You're very silly. He's not half as

good looking as Jackson, and you know it. Only we see Jackson every day, and—"

"Oh-h-h!" said Clara. "I've suspected that for a long time!"

"Suspected what? Keep quiet!" were the contradictory remarks of her best friend. Then: "And I'm going to be so lonely after he has gone! I'd like to cry. I almost did. Think of all the girls he'll meet there in the city! Oh, I hate New York!"

"You've never been there."

"No. But I've heard about the girls there. Lots of them—drink—cocktails. And I hate that street he's always talking of—Broadway!" Then, suddenly, and to the amazement of her friend, who instantly was filled, however, with a perfect understanding, Josie burst into tears, and with a quick "Good night," rushed toward her home.

Before they parted the city youth gave Broadway his card.

"You've been very nice, old chap. Come to see me when you strike New York."

"It's absolutely certain—and I'm coming in a year."

To his amazement, the events of this extraordinary night had not yet ceased for Broadway Jones. He walked down the street toward home, filled with longing for the year's end, and found Sammy, Clara's small brother, asleep upon his doorstep.

"Hi, Sammy!" he cried, shaking a fat shoulder.

"Yes—sir; I'm goin'—to—be—like—the boy began before he was entirely awake."

"I know, like Rip Van Winkle. But he didn't take his nap upon a doorstep. Why aren't you at home, in bed?"

Sammy rubbed his eyes. With maddening deliberation he informed Broadway that the judge had sent him, with instructions to find Broadway and tell him he wished to see him. "He—said—it—didn't—make—no—difference—how—late."

"What! As near midnight as this? Child, it's almost ten o'clock! All Jonesville is asleep."

"He says—for—you—to—come. I'm goin'."

Whereupon he went.

Jackson followed speedily. Such a summons from the judge at such an hour must bode something cataclysmic.

He found a worried judge pacing up and down his office floor.

"In the office, at this hour! You really want to see me, judge?"

"Yes," said the old man firmly. "I've determined that I will not be a party to deception."

"Who's been deceived, judge?"

"Jackson, your father's will gives you his fortune when you're twenty, not when you're twenty-two. Your uncle wished to keep it from you. I do not think you ought to have it now, but you're entitled to it."

Broadway gazed with a dropped jaw. "Judge, I'm getting all mixed up. You say I get it when I'm twenty-one? Why, I'm twenty-one already!"

"I know you are. I know you are. I never saw the document until today. It was drawn up by Boston lawyers. And at first I thought I'd do exactly as your uncle asked—let you think it was as he had said it was. But I've thought it over and it seems to me you'd ought to know."

Broadway merely stood and stared.

"Your uncle thought that he was acting for the best," the judge insisted. "He's been hoping you would settle down. When you didn't, he thought he'd steal a year from you, and give you one more chance. When he told me this tonight, I told him that I didn't think it was just right; and—finally—well, you know it all now."

Broadway found the power of speech. "Good old judge!"

"Then you're not angry?"

"I'm too happy to be angry. Got a time table about you?"

"Jackson, Jonesville was named after your ancestors."

"Well, I don't like to live in it. I know a chap named Bright. Very likely Bright's disease was named after his ancestor, but I presume he doesn't want to die of it. Judge, Jonesville is an ailment."

The judge, infinitely relieved, now that he had made a clean breast of the thing, leaned back in his chair and laughed, despite his worries for the young man's future.

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"When can I get that money?"

"The trustees will have to pay it on demand."

Jackson laughed with rare delight. "Uncle's one of them. How it will pain his fingers when he hands it out to me! I'm going to demand! And I want to start tomorrow. I want to start tonight, but I am reasonable. I won't wake the old man up. But while you go to get the money in the morning, I'll get set at the town line, waiting for you to bring it to me, ready to get, anyway, 60 yards out of the township within 60 seconds. How I wish I really could sprint!"

"Broadway!"

"I know, judge, but let me tell you why I hate Jonesville and how. You know my mother?"

aid to a stick of chewing gum."

"He always wished to have you take an interest in the gum business."

"I did, till another kid slipped me a stick one day, when I was absent-minded, and I began to chew it. Then and there I made up my mind to devote my life's endeavor to something which would not stick in your teeth. Judge Spotswood, lobsters don't."

"My boy, I wish you never had seen New York!"

"No, you don't, Judge, you wish you were going with me when I start."

"Are you going to stay away?"

"Uncle says that in these days each man should have a specialty if he would be successful. I'm going to specialize on staying out of Jonesville. I'm hoping for success."

"Have you no friends here whom you dislike to leave?"

"You and the judges, Judge, and Clara. I'll miss Josie, too. And there are some down at the factory. Bill Higgins, I like him. He used to entertain me when we went in swimming and he got the cramps. Awfully funny when he had the cramps, Bill was; peevish but very funny. I shall miss Bill. But Jonesville, as a whole, Judge—I'm not going to miss Jonesville, except the way a man may miss a tooth that has been pulled for cause."

The judge sighed. "Well, I had to tell you."

The young man looked at him with a strange earnestness. "Judge, would you get mad if I should kiss you?"

"And you are really going, right away?"

"It's going to be the quickest getaway Connecticut ever heard of."

CHAPTER III.

Almost as speedily as he had told the judge he would, Broadway prepared to leave Jonesville. There was a stormy session when the old lawyer told Abner Jones that he had made the revelation to the boy, but the old man's threats against him were quickly silenced when the judge reminded him that what he had proposed to him was fraud and that an action for conspiracy might be brought against him.

The car wheels sang to Broadway as he journeyed west and southward. He gave cigars to the conductor, to the trainmen, to the engineer as soon as the train waited long enough for him to get to him. He bought all the new baby's papers, novels, magazines and sent him through the cars to give them to the ladies. Then, on his return, alight with smiles, he bought the last ounce of his candy and told him to appropriate it to the use of his own sweet-tooth.

Arriving in New York a red-capped station-porter saw him from afar and recognized the strong financial candle-power of his expanding smile. Galvanized into extraordinary action he rushed toward him, calling to two friends to join him instantly and help him bear the two bags Broadway carried. The traveler had to give the third negro his hat, so that he might seem to earn his tip; but he did this gladly. The taxi-cabman flew, scrambling from his box, at the mere intonation of the porters' voices.

"Where to, sir?" he inquired.

"Is this New York?" his fare asked, smiling gently in a way which made the chauffeur think he was a wanderer, returned unto his own, and wishful of facetiousness.

"You bet it is; just little old New York."

"I thought so. It seems so familiar. Well, I want to go to Broadway."

"What part of Broadway, sir?" (Ob-

serve that this Grand Central taxi-cabman persistently said "sir." It was a tribute; Broadway knew it was a tribute and it warmed his heart.)

"Oh, all of it."

"Take you to all of Broadway?" Even the taxi-cabman was astonished.

"I want to look it over, for I'm going to buy it if I like it as much as I always have."

The cabman eyed him shrewdly, decided that he was quite sane and sober, resolved to tie to him with a tenacity which never could be shaken off, climbed to his narrow seat beneath its narrow hood and yanked down the flap upon the taximeter.

"My name is Gridley, sir," he volunteered.

"You may fire when ready, Gridley," Broadway answered, and then Gridley pulled the lever.

Before the day was over Jackson Jones had bought a forty-horsepower limousine, a sixty-horsepower touring-car and a runabout. Gridley had turned in his resignation to his em-

ployer and been measured for five suits of livery, of expensive cloth, exclusive cut, extraordinary color. Having done this he had asked a girl to marry him, had been accepted, had taken sixteen drinks and gone to see her mother, had then been thrown out a jittered man and had returned to Broadway Jones, determined to live single and attached to him forever. The episodes had sobered him and he was quite himself when Broadway asked him what apartment he would recommend for living quarters.

"Quiet place?" he asked.

"Not for your new employer," Broadway answered. "I want it to be on Joy street, between Happy boulevard and Don't Care alley. The noisier the better if the noise is always laughter. I want it named The Smile and I want it furnished in bright red. Take me somewhere where they'll sell me a good butler—fancy brand, no matter what the price. I want a butler who can go and buy a home for me—a home that glitters and is glad. Throw on the high-speed clutch."

Gridley took him, in his brand-new car (which ran as smoothly and as noiselessly and swiftly as a pickering swimmer), to an employment agency which he had heard about, and there Broadway signed the lease for an extraordinary person, principally named Rankin. He looked like a bishop, talked like a British lord, walked like a major-general, bowed like a diplomat, never smiled, always said "Yes, sir," and "thank you, sir," whenever there was room for these impressive words, was ready to be measured for as many suits of livery as had been ordered for the chauffeur and assured his new employer that it would give him pleasure both to find and furnish an apartment for him.

"When will you have it ready for me?"

"Tomorrow morning, sir."

"Then you know what apartment you are going to take?"

"Not yet, sir. Breakfast at, say, ten, sir."

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"Rankin, you will do. Make it eleven. Engage a cook and second-man."

"I have already telephoned for them, sir."

"I have raised your wages, Rankin, for long and faithful service. Let me see—you've been with me forty minutes. See to it that you do as well in future."

"I shall, sir; and I hope you'll do the same, sir."

"Find Mr. Robert Wallace in the telephone book. He's in the advertising business."

A moment later Rankin turned back from the little table at the side of the large parlor which supplied headquarters for the ex-Jonesvillian for the time being. "I have him on the wire, sir."

"I'll talk to him."

Broadway took the telephone receiver from his butler's hand and cried into the mouthpiece: "Hello! Is that you, Robert Wallace? . . . Well, this is Jackson Jones. . . . Yes; the same you met in Jonesville when

they pinched you, that reckless night when you were driving at four miles an hour. . . . No; I've come down to stay. I'm asking you to dine with me tomorrow evening. . . . Can you come? . . . Good. I'll telephone again, or have my butler telephone, and let you know just where. . . . All right. Fine! . . . Goodbye."

Robert Wallace was his guide, his mentor and his friend for some four weeks. After that he was his friend and mentor, but resigned as guide, for Broadway took the reins. He had a passion and a genius for investigating metropolitan affairs of lightsome nature. The business marts of Gotham were offensive to him. He thought it silly for mankind to waste its time in work and said so. The teeming fascination of the far sides of the town, so dear to sociologists who love human nature best after it has sweated or suffered off its varnish, found no devotee in him; he could not understand why entire families should live in huddled rooms on Essex street when there were large apartments vacant in the great hotel flat house next door to the vast mansion inhabited by Mrs. Jack Gerard on Seventy-second street. Mrs. Jack Gerard was an old lady of incredible wealth, who tried to hold Time's hand in palsy. That she had failed had been no fault of hers or of the beauty parlors or cosmetic makers.

"They would be so much more comfortable if they would go where they would have more room," Jackson continued, in further comment on the very poor, and would not listen to the earnest soul which tried to offer explanations.

A year passed. Broadway carried three bank accounts, two of them not very large and seldom checked upon. The third was in New York's all-night bank. He kept busy. "I feel as if I ought to see the sun rise often," he explained. "Sunrises are so beautiful."

He seldom heard from Jonesville in these days. Judge Spotswood sometimes wrote to him, his uncle never. For a time he had endeavored to keep up a correspondence with the girls, but this had languished through his own exceeding occupation at more pressing matters and Josie Richards' sorrowful conviction that he did not "tell her," in his brief, impetuous letters, about all the girls whom he was meeting in New York.

His first shock came when the All-Night bank wrote him a letter, asking him to call and talk of his account, and this did not occur until four years had vanished in the haze of Broadway's lights. It made him sit straight in his chair and blink as a cold dash from a seltzer bottle sometimes had when he had needed it. Rankin, entering, asked him if he had a pain.

"You bet I have," said he. "And I'm afraid it's serious."

"Shall I call a doctor, sir?"

"No, call a banker."

(To be Continued)

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