

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 thoroughfare, 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 \$50,000 left him by his father is at his disposal. Broadway makes record time in heading for his favorite street in New York.

CHAPTER III—With his New York friend, Robert Wallace, Broadway creates a sensation by his extravagance on the White Way. Four years pass and Broadway suddenly discovers that he is not only broke, but heavily in debt. He applies to his uncle for a loan and receives a package of chewing gum with the advice to chew it and forget his troubles. He quietly seeks work without success.

CHAPTER IV—Broadway gives what is intended to be a farewell supper to his New York friends, and before it is over becomes engaged to Mrs. Gerard, an ancient widow, wealthy and very staid.

CHAPTER V—Wallace, expostulating with the aged first and her youthful fiancé, but fails to better the situation. He learns that Broadway is broke and offers him a position with his father's advertising firm, but it is declined. Wallace takes charge of Broadway's affairs.

"You mean to tell me that—"
"I've got a whole lot to tell you. Sit down."

As Wallace found a chair and, as if exhausted, sank into it, Broadway paced the room uneasily.

"The bell rang and Rankin hurried in, on his way to answer it."

"If it's anyone for me, I'm not at home," said Broadway. "I'm visiting in—Paterson."

He turned again to Wallace.

"Now, in the first place," he said gravely, "I want you to understand thoroughly that I'm positively serious about this whole affair and that nothing you can say will change my plans. Is that understood?"

"Well, go on."

"Mrs. Gerard and I are going to be married, and it's going to happen very shortly, whether you like it or not. If you care to retain my friendship you must get used to it—he sighed—"the same as I shall have to. Am I clear?"

"Well, I'm listening."

Broadway sighed again. "I know several girls who will cry very bitterly, and I know a lot of fellows who will laugh very heartily; but the fact remains that the lady who just left this room is to become Mrs. Jackson Jones. So, once and for all, get it out of your head that it is a joke."

He glanced distastefully at his very mournful friend, who seemed, somehow, to have shriveled as he heard all this uncompromising talk.

"And don't sit there like a pallbearer! Smile! Utter a few kind words! Say something, anyhow! I—"

Wallace leaned toward him, his eye lighting with the fire of combat.

"Now—"

"Don't you dare to give me any argument about this thing! It would only be a waste of words. My mind is positively made up."

"Do you realize what—"

"What people are going to say? Of course I do. I've gone over all of that. I've thrashed it out with myself from every possible angle. I know what they're going to say, and I know exactly what they're going to think."

"Well, what are they going to think?"

"The natural thought will be that I am marrying her for her money."

"Nonsense. They'll know better than that. Everyone's aware that you have all the money any man could—"

"So you think so?" For the first time Broadway laughed. It was a scornful, scathing, tragic laugh. It startled Wallace.

"Well, haven't you?"

"Just a second. Rankin! Oh, Rankin!"

Rankin was entering, even as he called, bringing in a telegram. Broadway took it without heeding it and thrust it in his pocket unopened. He was intent on showing Wallace how affairs really were with him.

"Rankin," he warned the man, "I don't want to be disturbed for the next ten minutes. I have some business which I wish to talk over with Mr. Wallace without a single interruption."

"Very well, sir."

As soon as the man had left the room Broadway settled to his task of making a clean breast of it.

"I'm going to let you in on a little secret, Bob—my secret. No one else in the world knows. I wouldn't tell anyone else but you. I wouldn't tell you if it weren't for the fact that we've always been so close and such good friends. But remember—it's Masonic!"

Wallace gravely bowed. "Certainly." He was intensely puzzled; he could not imagine what was coming.

"Well," said Broadway, with no further prelude, "Bob, I'm broke!"

"To the extent of about fifty thousand dollars."

"Well, what have you done with all your money?"

"Put it back into circulation where it came from," Broadway answered, sighing.

"You mean Wall Street?"

"No; Broadway."

"Investments gone wrong?"

"I never invested any money. The only thing I ever did was to spend it."

"But you couldn't spend all the money you had!"

"It was easy. Everyone seemed glad to take it."

"But I supposed you had an enormous income."

"Well, that's what they all thought and still think. That's why I've been able to go along and run head over heels in debt. I owe tailor bills, boot bills, jewelry bills, flower bills, restaurant bills. I've got a stack of bills in that room there that would make Rockefeller complain of the high cost of living, and I can't pay them because I'm broke. Flat . . . broke! It's hard to believe, isn't it?"

"Why, you always led me to believe that you were a millionaire!"

"Not exactly that. But I did not deny the stories that, somehow, got to going round. Maybe I lied a little. At that, I would be worth a million by now if I'd had any business ability, with the bank roll I had to start with."

"When I came here to New York and started to burn up Broadway, five years or so ago, I was worth two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. There was cash, real estate and my small interest in the chewing gum factory. First thing I did was spend the cash, then I sold the real estate, then I sold my interest in the factory."

"I had no use for anything but cash."

"My Uncle Abner bought me out and cheated me. He paid me just a hundred thousand, a measly hundred thousand, for my share of the property out of which he's since then made a dozen fortunes. I hear the gum trust offered him a million dollars for the plant and the good will last year."

"Jones' Pepsin!"

"Yes; Jones' Pepsin, made in Jonesville. It's the oldest gum on the market. Ever chew it?"

"No."

"Don't. It's awful. It's terrible stuff!"

"Well, go on. What happened, then?"

"I could scarcely wait to get hold of that money and get out of that town. I wanted New York; nothing but New York. I had heard about New York; I had read about New York; I'd been down here as a kid on visits. I talked New York, I dreamed New York. Why, from the time I was a kid, in knickerbockers, to the time I left Jonesville, everybody called me 'Broadway.' That's where it began."

"I thought it started here."

"No! When I was a kid in Jonesville. That was my name—'Broadway'—just because I wore patent-leather shoes and put on a clean collar, now and then. That's the kind of a town it is."

"I've lived up to the name, I guess. I know every newsboy, policeman, actor, chorus girl, wine agent, gambler and bartender on the street. I've been to bed just one night in five years before six o'clock in the morning and that was when I had a toothache and my face was swollen. It was not the pain that kept me in; it was the looks of the puffed face."

He drew his breath in slowly, almost wonderingly. "Oh, what I haven't done so Broadway!" he continued. "Well, you've seen me. You've been with me. You know."

Wallace nodded. "I always thought you were pretty speedy, but I thought

"But I've had a wonderful time!" said Broadway finally.

"How long have you been broke?"

"About six months. My credit's carried me on. When I first went broke I made up my mind I wouldn't run in debt, no matter what happened. I put on an old suit of clothes that morning, and started out looking for a job."

"What kind of a job?"

"Any kind of a job. Messenger boy, elevator boy—I didn't care! I promised myself I'd earn my living without begging, borrowing or stealing."

He told Wallace of his stealthy search for the elusive job which was to have paid up his debts and started him again, this time as a millionaire in process of construction of new millions.

"I started looking for a 'boy-wanted' sign. It sounds funny, but it is a fact. My intentions were the best in all the world. But I got to thinking of something else, after I had walked a block or two, and where do you suppose I was when I woke up? In Delmonico's, eating breakfast! Turned in there out of force of habit."

"I made a dozen attempts to do the right thing. I cut out automobiles and rode in street cars for three days; I went to an opening night at a theater and sat in the gallery; I bought a pair of ready-made shoes; I ate meals at a forty-cent table d'hote and smoked five-cent cigars—practicing, just practicing, trying to get used to it."

"But I couldn't. That was all—I simply couldn't! All my good resolutions went to smash every time I took a look at Broadway. I knew my credit was good; the things I wanted were there; I could have them; so—well, I took them, that was all!"

"And now," said Wallace, who had sat, at first incredulous, and, later, spellbound, during the recital, "you are fifty thousand dollars in debt!"

"I don't know the exact amount, but that's a fairly good guess."

"You've been pretty quiet about it. It hasn't seemed to worry you much!"

"Hasn't worried me?" Broadway's voice was bitter. "Well, I don't mind telling you that I have just come out of the first sound sleep I've had in weeks. I'll bet I walked to Chicago and back every night the first month I was broke."

"I don't understand?"

"I mean if you had measured up my carpet by the mile. I thought so much and worried so much that I didn't dare trust myself alone. I had the weirdest ideas; I did the craziest things. Do you know that I belong to the Salvation Army?"

"What?"

"On the level. I went to Newark and joined one night."

"What was the idea?"

"I thought it might help me forget my troubles. I played the bass drum for two nights and couldn't stand it any longer. Er—have you ever been in Newark?"

"I've been through there on the train."

"That's bad enough. Guess what I suffered! I got off the train! Oh, you can't realize what I've been through. Bob! I've made a bluff and pretended to be happy all the time; but, believe me, old pal, there have been times when I've started for the Brooklyn bridge—and I won't tell you about a bottle of poison and a gun full of lead which I considered using. I didn't care about the money I'd spent; what worried me was that running in debt, day after day, with no chance of repaying."

"But you kept on accepting credit."

"And it was wrong—dead wrong! But—well, I guess it must be in my blood. I couldn't help it."

"How about your uncle?"

Broadway laughed, a cackling, scornful laugh.

"He's a rich man. Have you tried him?"

"Yes; tried him and found him guilty. I wrote and told him I was short of ready cash, after I had spent the pittance that he paid me for my interest in the Jones' gum. I asked him if he wouldn't lend me, say, ten thousand dollars."

"Did he answer?"

"Sure, he answered. Sent me a package of the gum and the advice: 'Chew this and forget your troubles.' He's in Europe now. He's worth a million, if he's worth a nickel, and he bought me out for practically nothing!"

"Stingy?"

"Stingy? He's so mean that every time he's asked to have a drink he takes a cigar and then saves up the cigars, puts them in old boxes, and gives them away for Christmas presents."

"Where have you been getting enough for tips and pocket money?"

"I sold that big French car I said was in dead storage. And do you remember that I said I'd lost a lot of jewelry? I hadn't. I had pawned it. How's my work, eh?"

"You're a wonder! I've got to hand it to you. But why didn't you confide in me long ago?"

"I didn't have enough courage to confide in anyone. I could only keep on hoping that some miracle would happen. I've thought of nothing except money and how to get it."

"And, Bob, last night, at that banquet table, I sat looking at Mrs. Gerard, thinking of her millions and wondering what she'd say to me if I should tell my story, trying to pluck up nerve enough to take her into my confidence and see if she wouldn't help. That's how it started. I didn't realize what I was doing; but I must have been staring at her for ten minutes when she called a waiter who, presently, handed me a note."

"What did it say? Was it from her?"

"Yes, and it said: 'Why do you stare at me so?'"

"Did you answer it?"

"Yes."

"What did you say?"

"Oh, I couldn't help it—I was desperate. I said 'Because I love you!'"

"And she answered?"

"Yes; I love you, too!"

"And you wrote?"

"Not as much as I love you. We had quite a correspondence. Seven or eight notes each way."

"Who sent the last one?"

"She did, and it said: 'Will you marry me?'"

"She really proposed to you?"

"On the level, and I didn't say a thing. The letter carrier lost his job right there. For fear she'd change her mind before the next mail arrived I leaned across the table and yelled: 'Yes!'"

"I'd gone, you know. Exactly what then happened?" Wallace asked.

"She fainted; general excitement; smelling salts; she slowly came back to her senses. Then the usual speech: 'Where am I?' That was my cue of course—although it hurt! Embrace, kiss, announcement to the dinner party; wild applause. Then somebody ordered 20 cases of wine."

"And the next thing I remember is old Rankin calling me when you came here today. What do you think of all of it?"

"It's terrible! You can't afford to let it go any further."

"I can't afford to do anything, with-

out signing a tab for it," said Broadway ruefully.

"You can do something. Haven't you any 'get up and go'?"

"That seems to be all that is left for me—to 'get up and go'—as far as possible—unless I marry her."

"If you'd go to work you'd have the makings of a business man."

"If I went to work I wouldn't have the makings of a cigarette."

"How do you know? You haven't tried. I'll get you a job."

"Where?"

"With my firm, on my recommendation."

"You'd lose your reputation."

"I'll see the governor tomorrow. I can get you, probably, five thousand a year to start with."

"Five thousand a year? How could I stay here in New York on that? I pay more for this apartment! I owe ten times that much, right now!"

"I've got twenty thousand dollars of my own. I'll lend you that."

"I'd never be able to pay it back."

"That doesn't make any difference."

"Yes, it does," said Broadway stubbornly. "Even though you loaned me enough to pay up all I owe, I'd owe you, wouldn't I? What's the odds whether I'm in debt to you or to the other fellow? I'd never get even with the world that way."

"But you mustn't marry her; it isn't right."

"How do you mean?"

"Would you do anything so low, and so contemptible, as to marry a woman deliberately for her money?"

Broadway shrank a little, then rose in self-defense. "Who says I'm marrying her for her money?"

"You know you don't love her," Broadway answered hotly. It was the only thing remaining for him.

"I don't know anything of the kind! Now, you see here; suppose you were in trouble. Wouldn't you love anyone who'd come along and help you out of it?" He sighed. "Besides, it's too late now. The engagement's been announced."

Wallace was intensely stubborn. He would not have this thing. "Engagements are broken every day in the week," he argued earnestly.

Broadway made a gesture of dissent. "Now, you leave it all to me," said Wallace soothingly. "I'll have a talk with Mrs. Gerard, and I'll guarantee to prove to her that it's all an utter impossibility. You needn't enter into it at all. I'll take the whole thing on my shoulders, and—"

Broadway shook his head emphatically, although regretfully. "No; there's no use, Bob. I told you I wouldn't listen to any argument against it. My mind is quite made up, and that's all there is to it." He pulled a yellow-back out of his pocket. "See this? A hundred dollars. That's my bank roll."

Wallace went to him with friendly warning. "You'll lose every friend you ever had in all the world!"

"No; I won't; people with money never lose their friends."

"I know one you'll lose," said Wallace gravely.

"You?"

"Yes; unless you tell me within the next 24 hours that you've reconsidered all this rot, and that you're going to fight things out the way a real man should, I'll never speak to you again!"

"Bob!" Broadway actually paled.

"That goes. Is it getting me any-

thing—this giving you advice? Will it put a dollar in or out of my pocket whether you marry that old woman or not? You're nothing to me except a friend and a pal; but I don't want to see you do something you'll regret for all the balance of your life. I'm sorry you're in trouble, and there isn't anything I won't do to help you. I'll go the limit in everything I've got. But, if you don't give up all idea of that marriage, never expect the friendship of a man who has any decency or self-respect."

"That's all I've got to say. Now, I'll be going."

(To be Continued)

SHOW A SPIRIT OF FRATERNITY

Pastor of Hemingford Church Comes to Alliance to Administer Ordinance of Baptism

The spirit of fraternity that has been so prevalent among the churches of Alliance reaches out to neighboring towns. Miss Frances Olds of Hemingford, daughter of the druggist at that place, wished to

join the Methodist Episcopal church. It was necessary for her to be baptized in order to be received into full membership.

The ritual of the church permits baptism either by affusion or immersion. As the young lady preferred the latter mode and as there was no convenient means of administering baptism by immersion in Hemingford in cold weather, she came to Alliance Friday, accompanied by her mother and pastor, Rev. Normal G. Palmer. They repaired to the Baptist church where Mr. Palmer, assisted by Rev. Frank C. Barrett and Rev. O. S. Baker, pastors respectively of the Baptist and M. E. churches of Alliance, performed the sacred rite. The baptismal party returned to Hemingford on 43.

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you could afford it. The trouble with you is you've been too liberal."

"Liberal! Why, when I go into a restaurant the waiters come to blows to see who'll get me. In barber shops as I approach you'd think some one had just yelled 'Fire!' the way the barbers dash for the chairs. Oh, I've been the bright-eyed baby boy around this town, all right. It's cost me a fortune—all I had."

His voice trailed into silence; Wallace sat looking at him dumb.