

Eight-year-old, high school girl, model, movie actress—they're all Jean. She has worked her way up through opposition and disappointment; she has come smiling through to steady success.

GROWING UP

Jean Arthur is on the High Road to Stardom

By John Godfrey

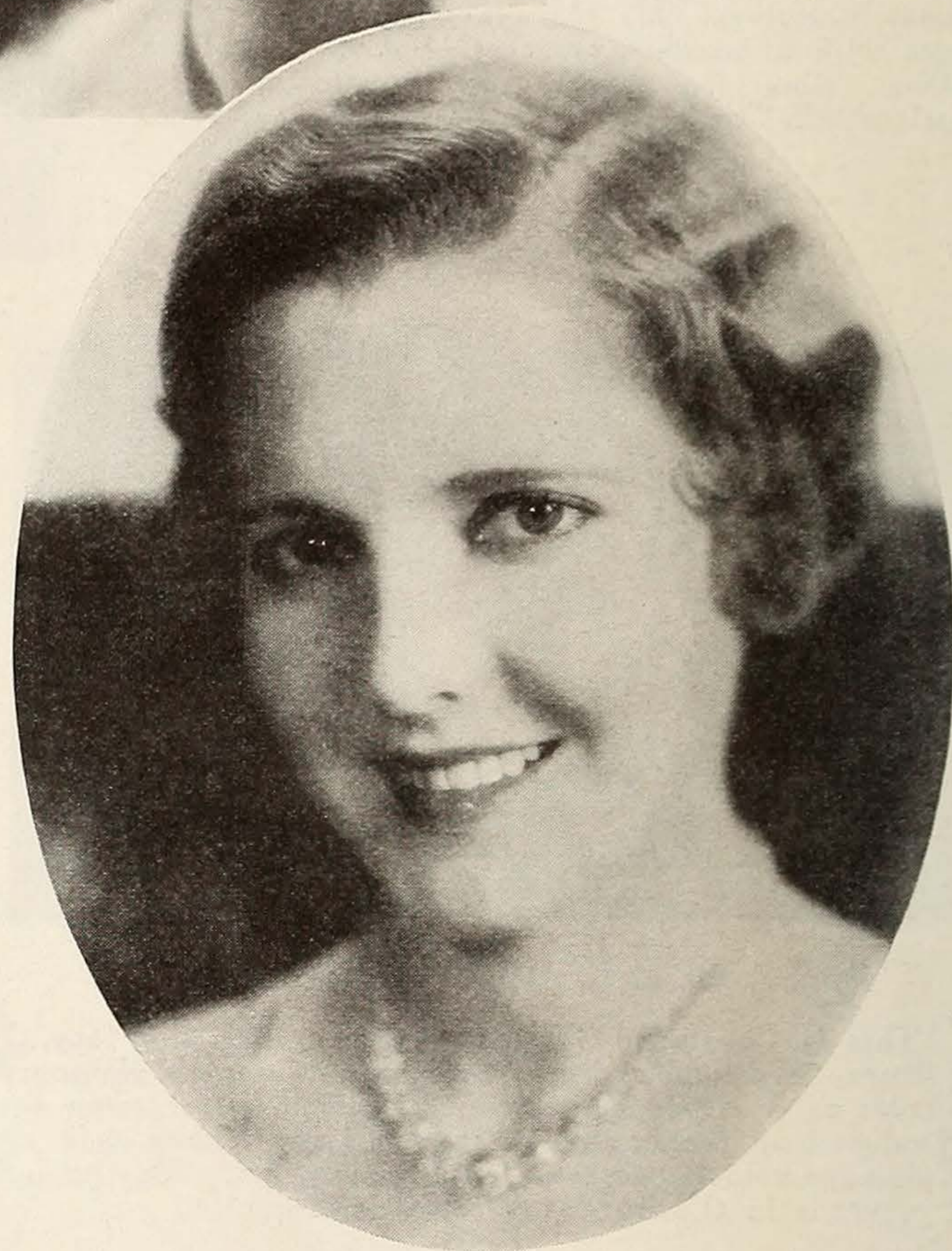
FOR whatever she is, for whatever she will be, Jean Arthur can thank Jean Arthur.

She is one of Hollywood's most interesting young personalities. By nature, she has a lure of mystery which few American actresses have. By training, she has the determination of a young business man.

Jean Arthur has done what most girls couldn't. Instead of having a manager to act as contact with the outside world, she has fought alone. During these five years she has developed from a rather plain high school girl into an interesting actress who can be classified as neither ingenue, leading woman nor menace, playing dumb-bell flappers and smart debutantes with uniform success.

With "The Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu," "The Greene Murder Case" and "The Saturday Night Kid" to her credit, Jean Arthur is about to realize the result of her remarkable courage. She worked almost four years before her first chance came, and those years have made her the Jean Arthur of today. She is a sensitive, cultured girl who, one would think, could not stand opposition and defeat for any length of time. But disappointments have given her a calm outlook on life. Nothing that anyone could say about her could disturb her now. It would hurt her, but in these years she has gained the poise of a woman twice her age.

Jean Arthur would have been a college girl today if she hadn't accompanied two of her friends to a commercial photographer's studio during her freshman year at high school in New York City. She was a plain girl with long hair and there were freckles on her face. Nevertheless, when one girl was late the photographer asked Jean to pose for a hat advertisement, and she was given a five



dollar bill for the half hour's work. To her great surprise, the developed print showed excellent photographic qualities. Right there her career began. Since Jean was fourteen years old she has supported herself, and has done it well.


With a group of girls under contract to a big film company, she came to Hollywood. Her mother accompanied her, although it was against the entire family's judgment that their daughter become an actress. Jean has a large inheritance of determination, so sweetly and politely she told her folks that she had done well enough and for them to wait and see. Many a time the advice of her family against her career prompted her to go on.

Miss Arthur's initial disappointment in Hollywood was in being taken out of her first important part and put into westerns and comedies for the remainder of the contract. She worked around Hollywood for years. During the first years in the film colony, defeat came so often that Jean finally took hold of herself and realized that those periods in which she was sunk in (Continued on page 110)

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the depths of despair did her no good. Gradually she pulled herself out of that frame of mind by believing that nothing was important enough to worry about. Even now there are few things she thinks big enough even to argue about. She has learned to do everything according to the very best of her judgment and once a decision is done to forget it.

In four years she worked herself out of westerns and into a rôle in Richard Wallace's "The Poor Nut." Even good reviews failed to get her more work. Psychologically, defeat is very bad for anyone trying to succeed. It worked into Jean until she wasn't quite sure whether she was good or not. A test won for her a chance for the lead with Richard Dix in "Warming Up." Success in the rôle would mean a five-year Paramount contract.

Unknown to anybody at the studio Jean Arthur passed the most severe test of her life. The director encouraged her, but she was nervous. The years of futile attempts had torn down her faith in herself. She did not know the executives were talking seriously of taking her out of the production, but during one of the scenes she heard someone in back of the lights whisper that this was her last day. Those few careless words snapped into her. A terrific anger gave her excess energy through the day. No one said anything about stopping and she finished the picture. The culmination was a contract.

Hollywood seldom accepts a new girl with open arms. Jean wasn't noticed very much after "Warming Up," but Paramount's renewal of Jean Arthur's contract twice since this picture has given Hollywood confidence in her, and has given her confidence in herself.

Like most other persons who have had a hard fight for success, Jean has a keen consideration for the rights and feelings of persons with whom she associates. And few girls in Hollywood are quite as natural as she. She lives with her parents in an old frame house in the midst of a small grove of trees on one of Hollywood's side streets. The place has all the earmarks of belonging to one of the early settlers. It is comfortable but very plain. There is no gardner. Jean's father likes to water the lawn and keep it trim and neat. On warm days he takes off his coat and digs in the garden. There is no maid in the home. Jean drives her own Chrysler roadster, and lives the life of the average American girl.

With all her determination, Jean Arthur has some of the mystery of a foreign celebrity, an unusual quality for a young American girl. No one is ever quite sure of what she is thinking. Crowds of people meet with her distinct disapproval. At just two of Hollywood's premieres has she ever appeared. She loves solitude. I never have seen her with a girl friend or at a bridge party or tea. She takes long rides by herself, or with one of her dogs for company.

All the year round she goes swimming at the beach. Every day when she is not working she gets up at six-thirty and takes her dogs to the beach for a swim. Beach

clubs meet with her disapproval because of the crowds. She has a special place where she likes to go. It has a fine beach front with a sign which says 'No Trespassing.' No one yet has questioned her right to be there but if they did she probably would say in a calm way: "I'm sorry, I didn't think you'd care," and walk away.

Jean's dogs are two of the important interests in her life. One is a wire-haired fox terrier and the other is a giant St. Bernard. On mornings when his mistress is working he goes into the hills for a bath in the creek. He climbs on a rock, jumps into the shallow water and swims out. On one of his trips to the hills, he lost his eye in some sort of accident. But the loss only seemed to add to his vitality. Jean says he could knock his head off and still go on in his happy way. The big St. Bernard is clipped every summer to resemble a lion. Both dogs fall all over themselves trying to greet Jean when she comes in the house.

At the studio Jean attends to her own affairs and keeps to herself. She knows few people. She passes persons on the lot unconscious of their presence. She talks very little except to those she knows well. She spends her vacations alone at some quiet resort. People are attracted to her because she is always well and tastefully dressed but she is seldom recognized.

Travis Banton, fashion creator at the Paramount studios, says Jean is one of the smartest young girls on the screen today. She has a sense of clothes that is born, not acquired. Banton first met Jean when he designed her wardrobe for "The Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu." He made her interesting clothes and she wore them as no one else could. She became more interested in her personal wardrobe and manages to have all the pieces of each costume in harmony. She has the good taste to adopt Banton's ideas to her own personality.

There is in Hollywood a select group of well-dressed women including Kay Francis, Florence Vidor, Evelyn Brent and Lilyan Tashman. Jean Arthur now belongs in this group.

Oddly enough, there is no type of parts that Jean prefers to play. There is only one thing which determines whether or not she likes a rôle, definite qualities which make a part either one thing or another. She liked her part in "The Saturday Night Kid." It wasn't sympathetic, but it was definite. She played a spoiled sister and there was no attempt to make her sweet.

Hollywood people are interested in the fact that Jean has been seen frequently the last year with a wealthy Pasadena youth. No one seems to know him very well. That is another part of her life that Jean tries to keep to herself.

In five years Jean Arthur has experienced more disappointments than a score of girls know in their lifetimes. It has left its mark on her. In her eyes at times one sees the disillusion of one who has struggled for success and found it an empty affair. Undefeated and undismayed, Jean Arthur has come into her own.

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JEAN ARTHUR worked hard and never missed an opportunity. Reward: a nice long-term contract and bigger parts.