

# A NEW GIRL

Dorothy Jordan is the Latest Newcomer  
from the Stage to Make Good in Pictures

*By Joseph Howard*



*She's only twenty years old, with a soft Southern voice and this smile. Welcome, Dorothy Jordan!*

**T**HE wonder of Balboa when his eyes first saw the Pacific, the gaping mouth of a comedian who has just been hit with a pie, these are as nothing when compared to the surprise with which Hollywood's isolated and startlingly unworldly citizens learned that stage people are just as regular as persons in any other walk of life. Sound pictures are firmly established and the motion picture players have been in amicable or not-so-amicable contact with stage actors for a number of months; but Hollywood's astonishment at the fact that a New York stage actor can be a 'regular fellow' and a Broadway actress 'a good egg' or 'sweet kid' has not yet faded.

Dorothy Jordan can be classed in Hollywood's free-and-easy vernacular as 'a sweet kid.' She came to Hollywood with the most laudatory advance notices. Press agents burned out the bearings of their type machines in their efforts to tell of this musical comedy star who was about to bedazzle the eyes of the Camera Coast. And, then they found out that the little, five-foot-two-inch player that

brightened the casts of "Treasure Girl" and "Funny Face" was just a sweet kid with a Tennessee drawl and one of the most engaging grins ever unleashed before a camera. Some of the Hollywood dwellers were even disappointed that she wasn't high-hat and stagey in the way they had expected all stage players should be.

"They all seem to think I'm joking," Dorothy said, in a leisure moment on the set where she is working as Ramon Novarro's leading lady in "Devil-May-Care," "when I say that I'm Dorothy Jordan. They seem to expect some majestic person with a lot of dignity, temperament and poise. They don't seem to realize that it's just as easy for a girl to be successful on the stage at twenty as it is for a girl of the same age to be a star in motion pictures. Why, even Greta Garbo isn't more than a couple of years older than I. She made her first success when she was my age. But, still they don't seem able to grasp the fact that stage success is no more difficult than screen success if you are properly equipped." (Continued on page 97)



*Ramon Novarro and his new leading lady, Dorothy Jordan, in "Devil-May-Care," a Napoleonic romance and Ramon's first all-talking film.*

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distinctly understood,"—(he fixed us with stern eyes and words)—"I never sang in a choir or a night club!"

As this sally brought chuckles from the gang, he added confidentially, "I was driven to it in self-defense. Singing, I mean. During the making of a picture in which I was playing the leading rôle, executives went frantically around the studio trying to think of someone who could sing the leading rôle in another picture. They asked darned near every man in the studio if he could sing. They even asked a gateman. But they never thought of asking several picture actors on the lot who had become popular originally in silence. Guess they thought we had lost our voices.

"At any rate, I said to myself, said I, 'Lloyd my boy, you had better get busy if you want to stay in this new picture racket. They won't believe you can talk or sing if you tell them, so you had better be good when you do try to show them.'

"My talking voice got by okay in the tests, so I just figured I'd wait to spring the singing until some of the really good singers from New York had gone back to the stage for one reason or another.

"When my teacher finally said, 'Lloyd, you'll never be a John McCormack, but you can carry a tune pretty well, and you don't flat any high notes,—I knew I was as ready as I ever would be. And here I am, Lloyd Hughes, warbling at everything from *I Kiss Your Hand, Madame* and *Pagan Love Song* to *For You Alone* and *Tosti's Good-Bye*. The joke of it is, boys and girls, you have to listen now whether I'm good or not."

Beneath all this light and airy badinage on the part of the usually reticent and conscientious Lloyd Hughes, I detected a

serious note. Drawing him aside later, I reproached him.

"Never mind running your voice down the scale," says I. "I've got ears of my own and a soul for music, and I think it's pretty good. On the level, don't you get a kick out of making the grade with something new?"

The victim looked furtively around.

"Yes," he admitted like a man, "I do. I like to sing, but I don't want such a fuss made about it. All I want is that rôle in that picture and if it takes a voice to get it these days, I aim to please."

What could be fairer than that?

Lloyd Hughes has had one of the most interesting careers of any of the younger players. No less than five Arizona towns can claim him as a native son. He was born in Bisbee, but he was raised and educated in Globe, Douglas, Tuscon and Phoenix. His family brought him to Los Angeles for his high school education. Lloyd attended Polytechnic High School where he gained a reputation as a splendid all-round athlete.

In those days motion picture companies filming scenes on the city streets were novelties. Lloyd secured his first job as an extra in this way, and he had to play 'hookey' from school to do it. Becoming intensely interested in motion pictures as a possible career, the youth secured his first real job not as an actor but in the dark room of a film laboratory. He possessed such a fine physique and made such a splendid appearance that he soon attracted the attention of directors when he played in the extra ranks.

His first opportunity came when another adventurous youth, King Vidor, produced and directed his first motion picture, "The

Turn in the Road." This little gem proved surprisingly successful so both King and Lloyd found themselves on the high road to success. Then Lloyd attracted the attention of the late Thomas H. Ince, the star-maker, who placed him under contract as a juvenile leading man. For three or four years, young Hughes played leading rôles under the Ince banner and was developed into an actor of ability.

Here he met Gloria Hope, a promising Ince player, still in her teens. After a year or two of courtship they were married in 1922. Miss Hope immediately gave up the screen for domesticity.

Following his Ince career, Lloyd Hughes began a free-lance career in "The Sea Hawk." He was then signed on a long-term contract and played in many popular pictures.

Lloyd and Gloria Hughes have one boy, Donald, who will be three years old October 21st, 1929. Oddly enough, October 21st is the birthday of both father and son, so they can always celebrate together. For the benefit of those who love to know, Lloyd stands exactly six feet in height, has dark brown hair and gray eyes, and his favorite sports include golf, tennis, swimming and horseback riding.

"Yep," continued Lloyd reflectively, as we strolled out of the studio after the radio hour, "I have to make good all over again. The little woman gave up her own career for me and I can't let her down. Reckon I'll have to work harder than ever. But it sure is worth it."

If you could only see the lovely Gloria Hughes and their husky, handsome young son, you'd agree with Lloyd that it's well worth it!

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For a moment Miss Jordan's eyes were attracted to the set where Ramon Novarro in a French cuirassier's full uniform was going through a scene. Nodding in his direction, she said:

"They won't want me for a few minutes. Ramon is doing this scene all by himself. Afterwards—after he passes through that door you see on the left of the set—he meets me in a garden, and we play a scene together. Isn't it funny to see people in romantic costume go wandering through this jungle of wires and microphones and studio props? It's one of the things that I can't get used to. On the stage it's different."

"Much different?" I asked.

"Just different in little things. Fundamentally there's not much difference between playing for the movies or for the stage. The people are different, of course. And they're different in their relation to one another. There's more quarreling and less friendliness on the stage than there is in the motion pictures," Miss Jordan said.

"But you were saying just a little while ago that the people here didn't seem able to understand how you were so unassuming," I said.

"Oh, that's just the Hollywood idea!" she replied with a grin. "They think they're so sophisticated out here; and as a matter of fact, there's a great deal of the small town atmosphere about Hollywood. For some reason or other they nurse the idea

that stage people are a race apart. And then they're shocked and surprised when they find that we are not a bit better or worse than the ordinary run of people. It spoils their illusion, although they'd swear that they'd never had any if you were to ask them.

"I was called to a New York hotel to meet a Hollywood movie man," she went on. "When I walked in he was writing at a desk. He looked up and said, 'How do you do, Miss?' I answered, 'Isn't this suite 1012?' He said, 'Yes, but are you sure you have the right number?' The poor man had been expecting some person with a lot of vim, vigor and temperament, and in I walked. He later told me that he thought I was a school girl, lost in the wilds of a New York hotel!"

"But I've been on the stage ever since I was fifteen years old," Miss Jordan explained. "My folks wanted to send me to Southwestern University in Tennessee—we're Southern folks, you know—but I decided I'd rather go to the Sargent Dramatic School in New York. I was just a kid, but I'd been through high school in a hurry, you see.

"Dramatic school wasn't as exciting as I thought it would be, so I just ambled down to the Capitol Theater one afternoon and got myself a job with Chester Hale.

"That wasn't hard to do, as Chester Hale says he can make a dancer out of any girl

who has reasonably straight legs and a lot of stick-to-it spirit. I worked awhile for him and then got a job in the chorus of the Garrick Gaieties. I told them that I could sing and they let me try out a single number for them. After that it wasn't hard to get a 'spot' in 'Twinkle, Twinkle.'

"When 'Funny Face' was being produced I went to the rehearsal and asked them if I couldn't sing a few songs for them. They let me sing a couple of numbers and featured me in the billing. I must have got over all right, for when I applied for a job in 'Treasure Girl,' they gave me a lot to do and a great deal of space on their advertisements."

"How did you happen to get into motion pictures?" I asked.

"It was just as easy as getting on the stage. The Fox studios gave me a part in 'Black Magic.' And then Mr. Douglas Fairbanks saw a preview of that film and decided that he could use me in 'The Taming of the Shrew.' It was the first time I ever played Shakespeare. One day I got a call to come over to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and take a test. I was horribly nervous, but I guess the test turned out all right, for I got a contract and here I am, playing with Mr. Novarro!"

It may be put down as a matter of record that Miss Jordan won this part from a list of applicants which numbered more than thirty-five screen beauties.