

The love story of a dress model
who was good
at both kinds of figures



She stood lovely
in a floating
mist of a dress

Illustrated by
Jules Gotlieb

WANTED: MODEL — Size: tall twelve, 5 feet 7, bust 32, waist 25, hips 34. Must be attractive; experienced better dresses. Apply Marigold, 520 Seventh Avenue, 22nd floor.

"**T**HAT'S Fiddlebaum," Dawn said, tearing the ad from the Sunday paper. "Remember, Lily-May, he offered me a job last season when I was working for Dolly Dresses?"

The older woman rolled over in bed and sighed gloomily. "You ought to be on Broadway," she said. "You were born in show business and raised in the till of a trunk. And you're a type — the nice girl type — now practically extinct! I'll never forget how you stopped the show when you were six months old! I'll never forget that number! The Dancing O'Days doing Uncle Tom's Cabin. Your mother was Eliza and she came tap dancing across the ice with you in her arms. Your father was the bloodhound. When the audience got wise you were a real live baby, they went nuts! Was I sore! It put my act on ice."

Lily-May had been a headliner in vaudeville's palmy days. Billed as "The Southern Thrush," she had come skipping through a prop rose garden in hoop skirts and pantallettes, paused before the old Southern Mansion (backdrop) and warbled tender ballads.

Lily-May had been on the same bill with the Dancing O'Days the night of the tragedy. After their last turn the O'Days left the baby in care of a chambermaid and went for a ride. The car crashed over the steep embankment. The O'Days were instantly killed. The O'Days didn't seem to have any relatives, at least none who claimed the little girl, so Lily-May had kept her.

When Lily-May was "in the money" they lived in style — an elegant apartment on West End Avenue, a French governess for Dawn and Lily-May's pink satin bedspread embroidered in rhinestones. At present, they had a hall bedroom in a cheap theatrical hotel.

"When I land on radio," Lily-May said, "I'll get you a part even if I have to buy a slice of a show. My voice is just as good as it ever was! I can come back! Why, I've got an audition on Tuesday —"

Dawn looked up quickly. "But you won't miss your work will you?"

Lily-May sighed. If anyone asked what she was doing she explained that she was temporarily associated with a transportation company. Because of economic stress, she had become a professional shill, a "filler" for sight-seeing busses.

"I'm just dying to go to Chinatown," she would say loudly to the busman. "I hear it's so exciting. When do you leave?"

"Just as soon as we are full. Won't be long now, lady." So Lily-May would get on and sit in the bus hoping her enthusiasm would lure in paying passengers. When enough such passengers appeared, Lily-May would shrill that she had forgotten something and get off and sit in the next bus.

At half past eight the next morning, Dawn was waiting outside the Marigold dress company. At a quarter of nine, Rachel, Fiddlebaum's daughter, who helped and hindered the business, arrived. Rachel had many of the

physical characteristics of a lady hippopotamus. She waddled over to Dawn.

"You're the tall twelve we paid for the ad in the paper for, huh?" she said.

"Yes," Dawn said firmly. "I've been with Hollyhock and Dolly. I can sell dresses. I want thirty dollars a week."

"Thirty dollars a week! For thirty dollars a week Papa could get Joan Crawford! Come in and see what a fine place we got and maybe you'll work for nothing."

She unlocked the door to the showroom. To Dawn it looked just like all the other wholesale house showrooms. There was the stage on one side of the room and booths for the buyers on the other. At the end of the room was Fiddlebaum's private office, a large urn of preposterous artificial flowers on either side of the door.

"Back there is the dressing room," Rachel motioned. "Andre will try the dresses on you — she runs the models."

Dawn went back to the dressing room; and put on her smock. She was looking over the line, when Andre came in. "I'm the new model, I hope," Dawn said. She smiled.

Andre was about thirty, tall, with superb grace and great chic. "I hope so, too," she said. "Slip this dress on."

Dawn got into the dress quickly. "Good!" Andre smiled. "You have style. You won't find the line hard to sell."

"Then you think I'll do?"

Andre patted her shoulder. "You need the job, don't you?" she said softly. "Don't worry, you're set. It'll be a joy to have you — those other two!" She laughed.

The other two arrived.

Hulda was a large Nordic blonde with a long bob. She sat in the dressing room in brooding silence. But in the showroom, she moved with a somnolent majesty that lent dignity to every number she showed.

Dorothy was a redheaded chorus girl, modeling between shows. "Say,"

she said, looking Dawn over, "know what? You're the type of gal every man thinks he'd like to marry! Now me, I always give men the wrong impression. They think I'm just a bundle of sex." She patted on a row of eyelashes. "If I was you —"

Her advice was explosively interrupted. Mr. Fiddlebaum galloped into the dressing room, his hat jammed over his ears, his face purple. Wildly he waved a copy of "Women's Wear." "I've been robbed!" he shouted.

"No, you ain't been robbed yet, Papa," Rachel said, seizing him by the coattails, "the buyers ain't come."

"But Mr. Cripps, he's going to stop off to Moe Levy's first. It says so. I'm ruined."

"Cripps will be here at ten-thirty," Rachel said. "You ain't ruined yet, Papa. We got a new model. She's the nice girl type, we got everything else."

"I can't afford no more models," Fiddlebaum said.

"Cripps will like Miss O'Day," Andre said. "Sure," Rachel said. "After he sees the line you can fire her! But you keep her for now. You already paid for the ad in the paper anyway."

For the first time Fiddlebaum looked at Dawn. "All right, I give you eighteen dollars a week," he said.

TALL TWELVE

by TIAH DEVITT