

FIRST MOVIES

by FELIX RIESENBERG

THIRD INSTALLMENT
 "No, Becka, it's too hot."
 "You're 'fraid. That's what. You don't dast to go."
 "All right, come along," and John and Becka strolled casually from the front stoop of the tenement as Becka called, "So long! We're going for a walk," to Mrs. Lipvitch who sat on the basement steps with the twins and Mrs. Yartin, while Mr. Lipvitch argued with a customer within.

An hour later, in the dark of early evening, the girl and boy, arm in arm, strolled far from the crowds about the Clothing Emporium.

"Have you got any money?" Becka asked this frankly.
 "Lipvitch—your father," he corrected, "give me a dollar today." His hand gripped it in the bottom of the large trouser pocket, the one without the hole. He showed the bright silver coin to Becka.

"Say—" Becka clasped his arm with an insinuating pressure, leaning toward and in front of John, as she looked up into his face, for he was a head taller than the girl.

"Say what?" he asked, shoving her back somewhat roughly in his embarrassment.

"You're green," she laughed nervously. "Say, you are green," she af-

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firmed, as if a great truth had just then been disclosed. "You don't have to work for nothing," she added hastily. "Pa should pay you," she urged, again looking up into his face, still holding his arm, but refraining from closer contact. The boy walked straight ahead and failed to answer. "You should get a dollar a day," Becka continued, "and board too—he would have to give it—I will make him," she said positively.

Late that afternoon the dollar in his pocket had been given him grudgingly, guiltily, by Channon Lipvitch. And this only after an argument with Becka.

"All right, don't give it to him," she retorted to his repeated protest. "When he finds out—you look out. You ain't so smart," she warned. "John can sue you for damages, for back wages, some day. Give him something now—five dollars," Becka had argued.

"No! No! Lipvitch knew the danger, also the expense.

"You got to. You got to pay him something today," Becka was insistent, and, as John entered the Emporium on his return from an errand a few doors away, Becka bent a parting glance of warning on her father, her eyes threatening exposure as she nodded meaningly at John. Lipvitch had his hand in his pocket. He fingered a coin, a half, then in a prudent flood of generosity he seized a silver dollar. "Here, Chon," his throat was husky.

"Here, Chon, I god someding by you." He spoke rapidly. "A dollar—you earned it—vages, Chon—remember, vages," he repeated, handing the boy the large coin, thrusting it toward him impulsively, as if afraid John would not accept. "Ant remember, Chon, I don'd charge you nodding, nodding a tall fer board. You ged id all fer nodding."

Then, after an interval of pregnant silence, Becka having again linked John's arm through her own, doing so with a small laugh, a friendly, forgiving laugh, they walked out on Broadway at a point where its wholesale commercial aspect stretches northward.

To America, New York was Rome, and still is; the feudal city of the Western World, taking tribute from the ends of the earth. Other cities may attempt to dispute this, but New York, true to its name, keeps rising new and fresh and more powerful from its own continuous disintegration, shafts of steel and stone springing up out of the dusty demolition constantly under way. The wrecks and mistakes of the past feed ambition, flaring to higher and dizzier achievement.

Never was the town so young and bright and hopeful as on the summer night when John and Becka, far from their environment, walked on air, and literally rode on it, as they sped up-town on the West Side L. The squat, green-bellied steam locomotive puffed and wheezed, blowing its whistle as it approached the curves, where Becka with an "Oh!" clung close to John; they sat in a cross seat by an open window.

Descending at Fifty-ninth Street, Becka led him eastward to Columbus Circle. The tall shaft in the center, the different aspect of the people, the absence of push carts, and the dearth of children, puzzled John. Dodging the whirling stream of cyclists, they entered the shaded walls of Central Park through a rustic arbor. The dusty white macadam drives were lively with the prance of foam-flecked turn-outs, and the "clank" and "clink" of fashionable harness trappings.

And with the black art of this night of swift unusual motion and of rare sights, with Becka, soft and confiding, clinging closely on his arm, with the dread of Grogans forgotten in the distant alleys of the slums, the boy expanded to an influence beyond the measure of his understanding. He felt the secretive whispering of the dark.

Far to the North, from the direction of the Mall, band music filtered through the leaves, for the air was still, and presently captured moonlight, prisoned in a lake, was discover-

ed through a parting of the trees. John and Becka turned toward this, to the lower walks, the perfect ones planned long ago by a master gardener. Finding a secluded spot they sat down, the still surface of the reflecting pond almost at their feet. They were close together, a lilac bush screened them from the walk; they talked idly. Suddenly the light of the lake went out as a cloud drifted across the moon.

"You do, John, I know you do. Lilly Firkin saw you." Becka, in tones of pouting banter, was accusing John. Suddenly he found himself forgiven, forgiven for things he had never done, for lapses he had never committed, for things he had never even thought about, forgiven with the cool moist lips of Becka pressing eagerly against his own, stilling all protest of innocence, or of revolt.

His voice rasped. He choked and struggled, vibrant with the contact, holding Becka with convulsive strength. The first drops of rain found them oblivious to the coming storm. The boy, ill clad, hard in body, with few ideas but those of strife, released the girl; her sudden "Oh!" coming with the return of breath almost crushed out of her. John jumped up, picked up her straw hat, and pulling her by the arm led her to the bole of a huge sycamore whose broad leaves promised some shelter from the rain. Quick flashes of lightning, followed by harsh, rumbling peals of thunder,

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CAMERAGRAPHS

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ROOSEVELTIAN SALUTE! Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt, democratic presidential nominee, acknowledges cheers of delegates upon his arrival in Chicago. That's son James at right.



BEBE FRARY, Jackson Heights, L. I., is only 8, yet she's one of the most proficient "future home makers" enrolled in the Campfire Girls' Home Craft course. Here she is shown proudly exhibiting a Jell-O salad, one of her favorite creations for a tempting summer's jaded appetites.

A QUIET JULY 4th marked Calvin Coolidge's sixtieth birthday. May fever kept him at his ancestral home in Vermont.

CLOSE! Frank Wyckoff, Southern California, left, barely nosed out Bob Kiesel, California, a 100-yard dash, at recent ICAAAA meet.



DOUBLE CHAMP: Gene Sarazen is showing golf-dom this year, winning both the British and the National Open.



RURAL RHAPSODIES are the specialty of the Fireman's band, featured on the Thompson Corners radio program (sponsored by Post Toasties every Thursday night). This amusing picture is culled from "The Family Album," offered to listeners.



DOROTHY MACKAIL, film star, looks cool, yes!

were punctuated by the puny cries and screams of women running from the park as sudden swirls of cool air and rain whipped about the trees. Then John and Becka, like Paul and Virginia of the story, naked, not of body but of mind, raced beneath the trees and the lashing of the storm for the park gate at Fifth Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street. They took the East Side L., down again into the familiar closeness of the slums.

The end of September, in the city of perpetual change, brings with it the first refreshing whisper of cooler air; a new vitality springs to life among the heat-weary dwellers in the city. Sol Bernfeld had come back from the road after questionable success in providing crayon enlargements of family album portraits, with the Paris Spicy Package as a side line. The spicy package being a bulky surreptitious envelope, sold sealed "Against the law, you know, to show it," to be opened by the purchaser "Strictly in private." It was a suggestive package, retailing at twenty-five cents, or two bits, and sold wholesale to candy choppers on trains at seven, flat, a gross. Sol sold few of the crayon enlargements but did get rid of his entire stock of spicy packages to the farmers and their hands, even disposing of them to women by the simple process of refusing to even tell them what he was selling.

On his return to the city, Sol found Becka in a receptive frame of mind and John Breen pursuing his way in dogged silence. Becka's efforts, balked by his awkward inexperience, had at least served to place him upon a meager wage, in the size of which she evinced small interest. She soon walked out with Sol, then earning, as she boastfully confided to John, the princely salary of twenty-five dollars a week as runner for a Bowery burlesque show. And, furthermore, she was to appear in the chorus, of a leg show, "in tights!"—a secret carefully kept from Channon Lipvitch, but whispered slyly to John. And to prove it Becka showed John a photograph that brought a hot flush to his face. "Silly," she cried, "I'm an actress, you know." But for all that a coolness sprang up between them, and John refused tickets to the show.

And, as another side line, Sol Bernfeld began to match John against likely boys in clandestine boxing bouts of the lower city, taking him from hall to hall on Saturday nights, acting as his manager. These adventures were a relief to the growing dislike he felt for the Clothing Emporium and its cloying sameness. Fighting had become second nature to him. He liked the heat of combat and his craving for the excitement of the fight grew with his success.

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