

The owner and the Dummy scuffle. The Dummy seems to win. There follow a number of amusing acts in rapid succession. A harp player wheels on her harp but before she even gets to play we hear 'next'. There are high-kicking dancers who fall over etc. Each gets Oscar's thumbs-down 'next'. Finally it's Blousey's turn; she moves centre stage, (or almost).

BLOUSEY Blousey Brown. Singer.

OSCAR DE VELT The light, honey.

BLOUSEY (nervously) Er, sorry Mr De Velt, I didn't catch that.

OSCAR DE VELT The light, honey. Move into the light. So we can see you. This musical ain't set in a mine shaft. Name?

BLOUSEY Blousey Brown. Singer.

As Blousey opens her mouth to sing, Lena Marrelli storms down the centre aisle.

LENA Oscar, Oscar . . . I'm back! I'll give you one more chance, else I'm out for good. You hear me, Oscar. Out! Out! Out!

Oscar has welcomed her and joined her as she walks on stage. Lena takes over the spotlight from Blousey, cattily dismissing her.

LENA O.K. honey. Beat it back to Iowa, this show has got its star back. Lena's come home. Hit it, Joe!

The Pianist begins. Lena belts out a horrid show business song.

Lena sings the first verse of her song and the spot follows her off as she carries on singing in the wings. Light on the line of auditioners who are rather dejected. They disperse in different directions. Bugsy joins Blousey who sits on the edge of the stage.

BUGSY Cheer up, there's a million other jobs.

BLOUSEY Sure, on the street corner with a hat to catch the dimes in.

She kicks at a stack of cardboard boxes full of costumes.

BUGSY It's only a matter of time. Look, cool it will you?

BLOUSEY I've been walking the streets of New York for six

months now and the only fancy steps I've done so far are avoiding the man who collects the rent.

BUGSY So it takes time to be a movie star! We could come back tomorrow.

BLOUSEY Come back tomorrow! Come back tomorrow. That's all I ever hear. I spent my whole life coming back tomorrow.

Blousey kicks the boxes of costumes once more. They topple into the orchestra.

BUGSY Knock it off will you Blousey! Cool down!

BLOUSEY I will not cool down! I will not!

Blousey has sat down on a box. She has her head in her hand. Sobbing. Bugsy consoles her, a hand on her shoulder. He loans her his handkerchief.

BUGSY Don't worry, there's always Fat Sam's place.

BLOUSEY He won't see me.

BUGSY I'll talk to him.

BLOUSEY You know him?

BUGSY Know him? We're like that (*He crosses his fingers*)

BLOUSEY Real good friends?

BUGSY No, not exactly. It's just that when I talk to him I cross my fingers that he won't hit me.

Light up on Radio Announcer, left of stage. The red 'ON AIR' sign behind him. Urgently, as ever, he reads the news from the sheet of paper he holds in front of him.

RADIO ANNOUNCER We interrupt our commentary on tonight's exciting Red-Sox ball-game to bring you a further bulletin on developments in the latest outbreak of hoodlum gang warefare. Police now officially state that the new weapon, of devious foreign manufacture, known as 'The Splurge Gun', is being widely used by the mobster gangs. We interrupt our interruption to go straight over to our reporter, Seymour Scoop, who is on the spot at the latest splurging.

Curtain up. Light on centre stage. Upturned restaurant tables. We see