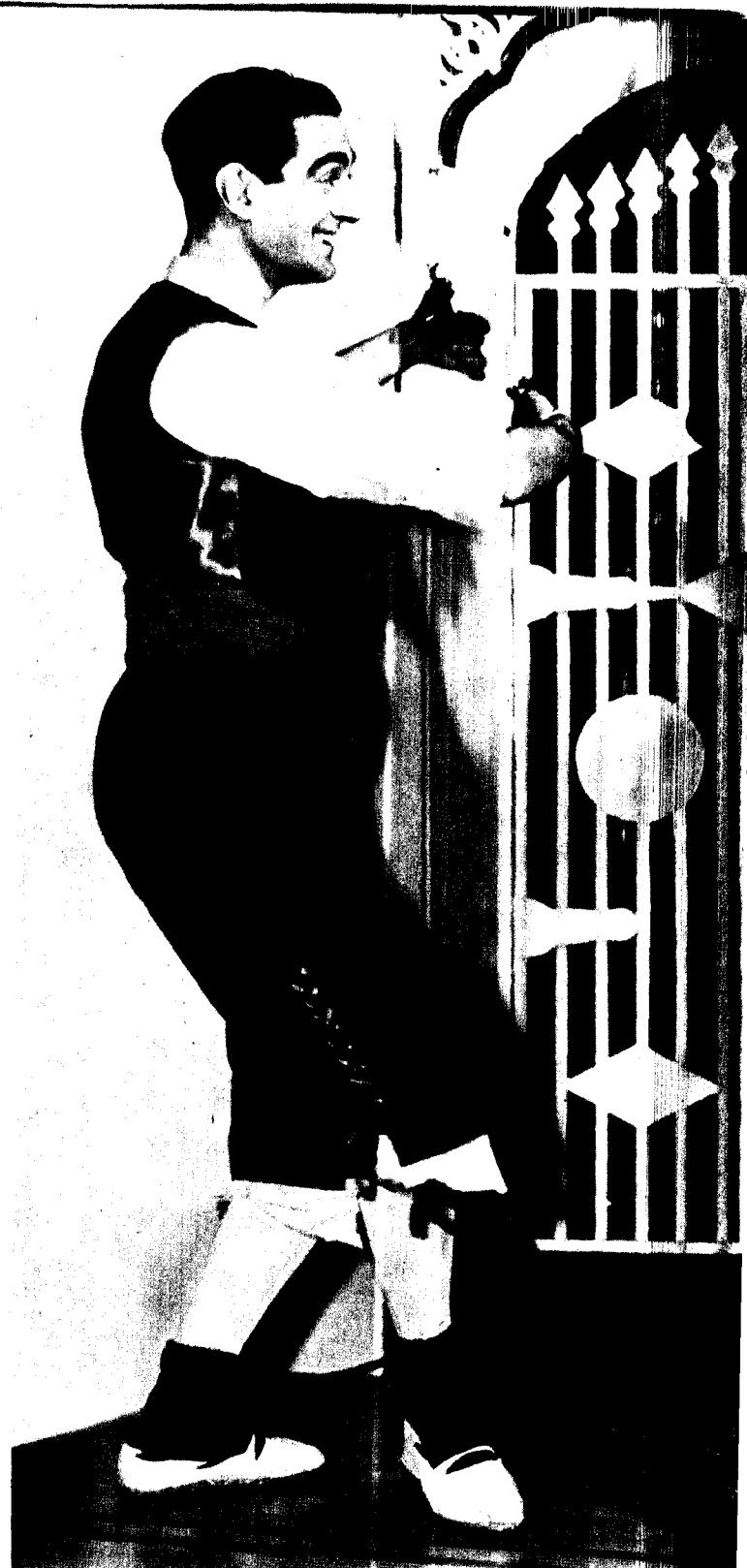




Alberto Torres kisses Fé Torrens while Lenore Fernandez and Mercedes Saez (right) try to appear disinterested. This is one of the more placid moments in the fast-tempoed Bolero



Castanets and a good share of fiery jumping and heel thumping make Torres' authentic Castilian Jota an exciting thing

BULL BALLET

THE way we like our bullfights is the way we get them at New York's Havana-Madrid night club: not rough but active. Alberto Torres and a bunch of athletic girls prance around in lush Carmenesque costumes, dodging the horns of the bulls, and nobody gets wounded, although the bulls do cut a papier-mâché horse in two, and the girls' feet must hurt when they get through. In fact, we asked the girls if their feet didn't hurt when they got through, and they said, "Yes."

That's because Maestro Torres is a stickler for pure Spanish technique, and this means that a dancer pounds her heels sixty times in sixty seconds at the beginning of a Torres dance, speeding up to 100 or more poundings a minute if the dance grows fiercely passionate, as it generally does.

Torres' dancing teacher back in Madrid was determined to train his prize pupil to the fastest footwork in all Spain. He succeeded. Torres himself regarded arm work more important and he waved his arms around before a mirror at least an hour a day for three years until they worked to suit him, and that was fast. Now he demands the same foot-and-arm agility of the dancers he trains.

Yes, Torres says, it is not technique that distinguishes a good Spanish dancer from a mediocre one. "It is something in here," he explains, pointing to his heart.

However that may be, critics are discovering in Torres and his dancing girls a thoroughness of technique that sets them apart from all other castanet-clicking, skirt-flouncing heel-pounders.

Besides the bullfighting number, Torres does a proud and beautiful dance to Ravel's Bolero, and a primitive war dance from the eleventh century called Jota Aragonesa—jota (pronounced hote-a) meaning jump. Every step of the jota is authentic, Torres says, and is based on diligent research he did in Spain.

A year and a half ago, Torres chose for his partner Fé Torrens, fresh out of a New York high school. She was surprised because at the time she was halfway afraid of losing her job in a night club chorus. She weighed 150 and that was too much. Strenuous Torres routines soon slimmed her down to bullfighting trim.

"I would like sometime to do a ballroom rumba," says Torres, gazing at the rumba-happy customers in his own night club. It is something I have not had time to learn." . . . A. P.

Another table-sitter's close-up view of the bullfight dance





A snorting but shapely bull (Dorothy Sevilla) ruins the picador's horse (Leonore Fernandez, front; Mercedes Saez, rear) in the colorful satire on Carmen

Virginia Lee makes passes with her cape at the bull (Jerrv Mann) while other matadors of the chorus resort to a less athletic and more amorous approach

The Jota Aragonesa is Torres' interpretation of a primitive Spanish war dance which was danced originally only by men, using swords instead of wooden wands



I HATE ACTORS

BY BEN HECHT

ILLUSTRATED BY GILBERT DARLING

The Story Thus Far:

"J. B." COBB, mogul of Empire Studios, gives Elvina Bliss and Dennis Wilde the leading roles in *Sons of Destiny*, an old stage hit which is being filmed in Hollywood. A short time later, Wilde is murdered.

Lieutenant Egelhofer, of the Los Angeles homicide squad, inspects the evidence and opines that Orlando Higgins, a well-known agent, is the guilty party. He carts Orlando off to jail. But Gilbert Higgins, the eccentric father of the unfortunate man, convinces four leaders in the movie industry that Orlando is innocent. Whereupon, the four give Orlando a perfect alibi, and he is released.

Unfortunately for the alibi manufacturers, Betha Fancher, an aspiring actress with whom Orlando is in love, informs Chester Devlin, a gumshoe reporter, that she had been with Orlando at the time of Wilde's demise. Devlin "breaks" the story, and since it happens to be true, the alibiers are on a spot. They are promptly indicted on a charge of perjury!

Hercule Potnik is almost murdered, and John Paul Jones, one of the principals in *Sons of Destiny*, is entirely murdered. Jones is poisoned.

Naturally, the cops, J. B. Cobb, the author (who tells the story) and everyone else are much excited. J. B. is more excited than the others, because from time to time the killer sends him threatening letters. He hires some bodyguards, and sticks close by them.

It is learned that, shortly before he had expired, Jones, dying, had accused Orlando of poisoning him. So back to jail goes Orlando. Devlin, however, finds evidence pointing to someone else, and again the agent is released.

By this time, Orlando is very deeply in love with the Fancher girl. He gets her the chance to star in a production known as *Dragon Moon*. But the lady feels that the role is unworthy of her genius. In the argument, she gives Orlando a neat going-over with her fists. After that incident, Orlando adores Miss Fancher!

J. B. posts guards around Empire Studios' plant to ward off murderers and Chester Devlin. Nevertheless, one fine day he discovers the reporter—disguised as an extra in the costume of a courtier of olden days—seated in a chair at the studio, with Elvina Bliss on his lap!

Elvina claims that Mr. Devlin has just saved

her life. Angered, when the lady had slapped Caroma, a young bit actress with whom he is in love, Laurence Bison (who had been given Wilde's part in the movie) had attacked her with a sword, and the courageous Devlin had driven him away. . . .

Among Orlando's clients is Bison, just referred to. Before Wilde's murder, he had driven Orlando almost crazy urging him to have Wilde ousted and himself given the leading male role in *Sons of Destiny*. A short time after the sword-play at the studio, J. B. receives a note from him in which he apologizes for his "eccentric behavior," caused (so he says) by his anger at seeing "that peerless child" (Caroma) beaten to the ground by "a hag-souled creature" (Miss Bliss) "who calls herself an actress."

IV

ORDINARY and even extraordinary disasters do not affect (employee) actors. Their dedication to make-believe is stronger than any incursions of reality. They can perform as soulfully on battlefields (and do) as on civilian stages.

I asked a Russian actor who had performed in Leningrad during its siege, "Weren't you too frightened by the shells exploding around you to act well?"

"The enemy artillery spoiled some of our lines," he answered, meaning the words of drama, "but we soon learned to time our speeches. In fact, the offstage cannonading was often a great help when we were playing a war scene. It contributed a wonderful air of reality."

I offer these little thoughts by way of explaining the fact that *Sons of Destiny* suffered not at all from the alarms and excursions I have reported. The making of that movie went on, undaunted. A company of Marines might well have been shaken a bit by the Wagnerian tumults focusing on Mr. Potnik's set, but not a company of actors.

The press of the nation, unflinching in

its battle with the evils of Hollywood, continued to offer its readers columns on columns of indignant erotica. The murderer of Messrs. Wilde and Jones continued to evade them but they had the devil firmly by the tail—which, for the time being, was as interesting a catch.

I was walking to work, scanning the morning headlines and wondering how soon our "Saturnalia Murders" would cease to be news, when a voice called my name out of a drugstore. It was Orlando, whom I hadn't seen for ten days. He was arrayed as if for a Mardi Gras (Hollywood's sportswear for men is as uninhibited as the rainbow) and his face was abubbling with joy. I joined him over a sticky table in one of the booths.

"I'm waiting for Betha," Orlando said, with an air of triumph. "We always meet here."

"It's a little cramped for fisticuffs," I observed.

"You've got her all wrong," said Orlando. "I want you to know her as she really is. That's why I called you in. One of the sweetest, most intellectual girls in the world. We've had some amazing talks."

"How's Gilbert?" I asked. "Still in bed?"

"Fine! great!" Orlando's eyes were on the door. "Do me a favor, will you, when she comes? Just draw her out on Shakespeare. You'll be really astonished. I'd stack her against any professor."

A figure I didn't recognize for a moment appeared in the door. It was barelegged, and clothed in a stiff little gingham dress full of green and white stripes. It wore a green knitted cap like a clamp on its fluffy hair and it walked flat-footed in sandals without heels. A hoop would have completed the ensemble. As it en-

tered, Orlando leaped to his feet like a cheering section, and I knew then that this seeming tot was Miss Fancher.

She had some difficulty getting in through the door, due to a case, a bit larger than herself, that was strapped, pappoose-fashion, on her back. It was a large, bulbous thing containing, I imagined, either a bull fiddle or a tuba.

"I'm a little late," she said, in a voice that seemed surprisingly mature, "and haven't much time."

"Moving?" I asked, nodding at the case.

"That's her fencing equipment," Orlando explained. "Masks, foils, costumes, everything. What time are the bouts, honey?"

"Eleven," said Miss Fancher coldly.

"I'll stop over at the office a few minutes," Orlando beamed, "and get there in plenty of time. You keep the car, honey."

MISS FANCHER was busy at the soda counter ordering a curious drink. It consisted of orange and lemon juice plus a beaten egg and a boxful of gelatin powder, the last ingredient appearing out of Orlando's pocket.

"Stir it up thoroughly," she ordered, "and, please, no ice. Try to remember this time."

"That's her own invention," said Orlando proudly. "She trains on it."

We returned to the booth.

"The Junior Finals are in two weeks,"

(Continued on page 30)

Orlando stiffened. Elvina was on him before he could retreat. "I want to get married," she moaned. "I want to be something besides a pin-up girl!"

