



A couple of hired clowns decorate the youngsters with fancy hats and paper frills as they arrive. The fond parents in the group are Hollywood stars Cyd Charisse, Laraine Day and James Craig

# MORE FUN THAN A CIRCUS

BY A. L. SIMON

Nothing is too good for Hollywood kiddies. This will give you some idea of the layout which millionaire Atwater Kent and party-planner Beulah Kuh had to work with. The elephant is real



In Hollywood a kids' party is a colossal affair. This one, attended by stars and sons and daughters of stars, turned out to be an A production, as you can see

**W**HEN Hollywood throws a children's party, you may expect it to be more sensational than a children's party anywhere else in the world outside the Land of Oz. Take the shindig thrown by millionaire Atwater Kent, famous for his hospitality, his eighteen-terrace estate and his fondness for children.

Mr. Kent went into a huddle with Beulah Kuh, who seems to be a sort of Elsa Maxwell, junior grade. Together they dreamed up the extravagant doings you see on these pages. The party lasted three hours, cost \$3,000 and gave employment to 47 people, 21 animals and two special traffic cops.

Additional statistics: 67 children were invited; 96 came, plus parents and baby-sitters. Six men spent four days erecting a tent, a barker's box, 12 side-show signs, booths for candy, popcorn, peanuts, hot dogs and pink lemonade, and a bar for sweltering parents. Five gross of toy balloons were inflated with helium—it took one man all afternoon to fill the orders. The camel which was engaged to give the children free rides weakened after 63 successive knee-bends and thereafter remained aloof and unapproachable. There was a five-foot circus cake with three tiers of carousels and hundreds of candy animals, which cost almost \$100.

Mr. Kent's guests were met at the gate by Josephine, a trained monkey who shakes hands. A couple of unemployed clowns then hoisted the children to the back of an elephant, which promptly headed for the refreshments with an uncanny instinct.

The terraces were decorated with nine-foot lollypops and peppermint sticks as large as barber poles. There was a seven-piece circus band, complete with uniforms, to furnish the oom-pahs for musical chairs. The Hollywood version of this venerable pastime, however, had its own gimmick. The children wore animal masks and tried to keep from getting caught without a cage to park in. Tightrope walking was one of the contests, with the rope tacked safely to the ground. Another was a film-land version of Pin the Tail on the Donkey—using a cap and a live monkey.

There was, of all things, a blueberry-pie-eating contest. It wasn't too popular. By the time most of the youngsters got to it, they were too stuffed. Brian Donlevy's daughter felt that it wouldn't be worth staining her pretty teeth for. Butch Jenkins volunteered, but then balked. "I don't like blueberry pie," he complained. "Make mine apple."

The free acts included clowns, a magician and a trained seal. In addition to the assorted wild and semiwild animals wandering around the estate, there was a large St. Bernard dog named Byron. Around his neck was a brandy keg filled with pink lemonade.

A live jack-in-the-box, in the shape of a midget dressed like a bunny, distributed gifts. There were so many of them that most kids got two. Said John Carroll's daughter to the host: "It's too bad you didn't give this party for my birthday. I could've collected an awful lot of presents!"

But Hollywood children can remain singularly unimpressed by all these fancies. George Murphy's son refused to look at the animals. "I can see all I want in storybooks!"

James Craig's son took in the menagerie but seemed disappointed. "No giraffes!" he complained.

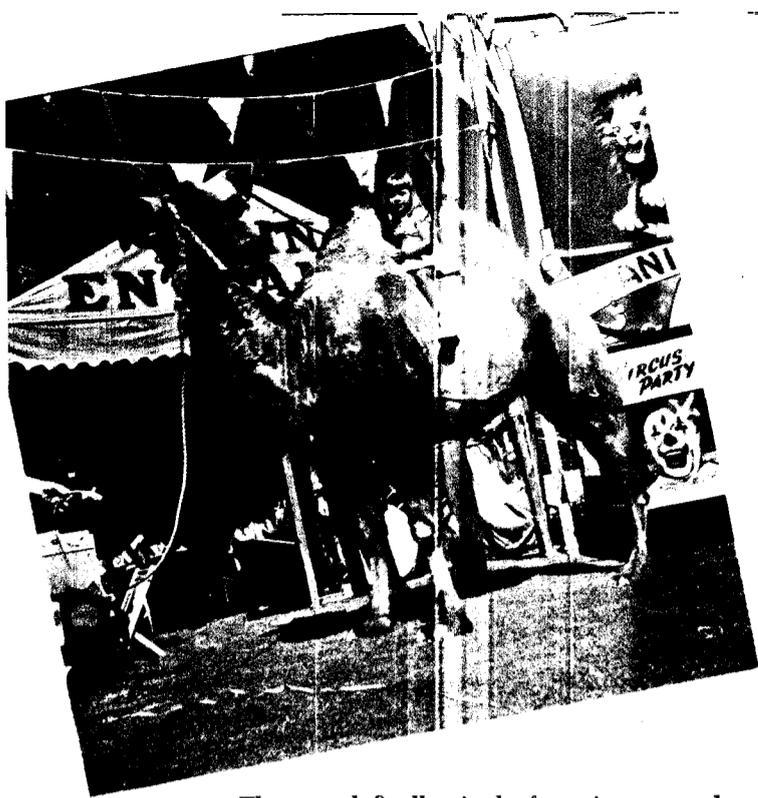
The animal rides, however, were genuinely popular. Margaret O'Brien took seven rides on the elephant before she would quit. Once, just as she was halfway up its side, Photographer Jack Manning yelled, "Turn this way!"

The elephant, having been raised in Hollywood, quickly turned toward the lens, and little Margaret almost toppled.

No less camera-conscious were the stars' children. Vincent Price's son, playing with some other youngsters, stumbled backward into a tripod. He recovered quickly and warned his young friends, "Never back into a photographer."

Altogether, Mr. Kent's intimate little tea turned into quite an affair. Nancy Sinatra, daughter of The Voice, had it right. "This," she observed, "only happens in the movies." ★★★

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR COLLIER'S BY JACK MANNING



The camel finally tired of getting up and down. Thereafter, kids had to be lifted. Above: Constance Bennett's daughter Jill



Bob Burns, of bazooka fame, watches while his young son Steve puts the millinery on the monkey. Steve's brother Billy and sister Barbara are also interested spectators



One more balloon and child star Butch Jenkins would disappear into the wild blue yonder — pony, saddle and all

Judges at the pie-eating contest were Joan Crawford, Vincent Price, Lorraine Day and host Atwater Kent



Margaret O'Brien turns toper at a tender age. Relax! The brandy keg around the large animal's neck contains only pink lemonade. The St. Bernard seems thirsty too

# LOVELY TO LOOK AT

BY FREDERICK BORG

All of Little Italy would stare at the car. And maybe—  
just maybe—the girl would see the boy behind the wheel

**T**HERE were other cars in the salesroom — Packards and Chryslers, two custom-built Fords and a Buick convertible—but the thin young man with his nose against the window did not see them. He was looking at the Duesenberg, an enormous phaeton with a hood half as long as the body, with spare wheels recessed in the delicately curved front fenders, a trunk the size of a piano, and two windshields, the usual one in front, and a second one folded flat over the tonneau. Everything that was not black was chromium, and there was a lot of it, including a twelve-inch searchlight supported by a chromium-plated standard bolted to the running board. In comparison, the other cars looked like toys.

For perhaps ten minutes the young man stood with his face against the window, making blinders of his hands so the strong light of the street could not cheat him of a single detail and, then, like a man who has made up his mind, he turned and went in.

A man with his hat on was sitting at a desk in the rear reading a paper, but he did not look up at the sound of the door. The young man went over to the phaeton and peered inside. The upholstery, he saw, was pleated leather, rich red leather, soft to touch. The gearshift lever was long and slender, culminating a few inches from the wheel in a glittering death's-head with ruby eyes. The parking brake was a heavy shaft of gleaming metal with a push-button release with a chamois guard at its base to keep the wind out. In the darkness of the rear compartment he saw, shining a few inches above the floor, a miniature dashboard. The ultimate refinement whereby passengers could tell speed, time, direction and even altitude without having to bother the driver.

He went around to the other side and slid into the driver's seat and looked down the unbelievable length of the hood. At the very end was a small silver figure which, with streaming hair and robes, was leaning into a gale and apparently enjoying it. The young man jiggled the steering wheel. His eyes narrowed and he smiled.

Finally the man in the rear folded his paper and tossed it on the desk. He stood up, yawned, stretched, and limped toward the Duesenberg, dragging one foot over the tiles with a sound of whispering; and the young man, who had been watching him out of the corner of his eye, slid out and waited.

"Good morning," said the man, pushing his hat back an inch or two

and passing his hand over his forehead, as if the effort had been too much for his bad leg.

"Morning," said the young man. "Quite a crate you've got here," and he patted the chromium-plated sill of the door.

"You can say that again," agreed the salesman. "They just don't build cars like that any more."

"What year is it?"

"She's a '33."

"A '33," repeated the young man, as though memorizing an essential fact. Then he leaned inside and studied the speedometer. "Sixty-two thousand," he said, his voice rising on the last word.

"That's on the level," said the salesman. "That's sixty-two thousand actual miles, none of this business of turning the clock back. Man, she isn't even broken in."

"What's the horsepower?"

"One hundred and twenty," said the salesman, spacing the words to give them emphasis. "You're looking at the most powerful stock car ever built. Figure it out yourself, with all that stuff she's loafing at eighty. Plus the fact she's never been driven over fifty. I happen to know, because do you know who this belonged to?"

"I'll bite."

"Creighton Halliday."

"The banker?"

"The same. He used to commute between Atherton and here, mostly forty miles a day at the outside."

"Thought he was dead."

"He's dead now, yes. That's how we happened to get hold of it. They only last month got around to settling the estate. There were four other dealers bidding on this job."

"Mind if I look at the motor?"

"Not at all."

The salesman lifted one side of the hood—the side away from the light of the street—and propped it up.

"I see you were in," he said, indicating the young man's discharge emblem. "You probably know a lot more about motors than me."

"Airplane motors, maybe."

"Oh, Air Corps, eh?"

"That's right. Fifteenth Air Force."

"Well, that was a good outfit. One of my nephews was in it. Don't suppose you ever ran into him. George Dietrich?"

"I knew a Steve Dietrich."

"No, this is George. He was in turret maintenance, I think. What'd they have you doing?"

"I was a pilot."

"Pilot, eh? Well, good enough."

He was thinking it was a little too

good, because if this kid was ever pilot of anything more complicated than a jeep, he, Donald L. Schaeffer, was no student of human nature. He had been selling since 1912 and could spot a phony at forty paces with one eye closed. It wasn't what they wore or how they looked or the way they talked; it was something less obvious, a penumbra of uncertainty and fear, that usually gave them away. The best of them never hit it quite right, they were either a shade too casual or tense. Their pretense was as obvious to him as the almost invisible defect in the jewel is to the expert.

**I**N THE last few months he had met a lot of pilots—good kids, most of them, a little awed, perhaps by a sense of their own importance, but essentially masters of the situation. At least they looked you in the eye. This one was a wanderer; he stared at the top button of your vest or the World War I emblem you'd resurrected and stuck in your lapel, or at a point on a horizon three inches above your shoulder, but if his eyes met yours it was an accident, and he glanced away. Still, a sale was a sale.

"Let me introduce myself," he said. "Name's Schaeffer, Donald L. Schaeffer, at your service."

"Glad to know you," said the young man shaking his hand. "I'm Frank Caruso."

"What were you, a lieutenant?"

"Yeah—just a lousy first lieutenant."

"That's pretty good for a feller your age. All I was when I got out in '19 was a corporal, and at that I must've been a good five years older than you."

"Infantry?" asked Caruso.

"That's right."

"That's really rugged."

"Rugged is the word for it."

"You must've been wounded," said Caruso. "I noticed your limp."

"Oh, sure. We all got it, sooner or later. I was lucky—stopped a chunk of shrapnel with my thigh. That's better than having your face blown off, I guess."

"Yeah," said Caruso. "You were lucky, all right. Me, I never got scratched," and he looked as though he regretted it.

"Well, Lieutenant," said Schaeffer briskly, "shall we just wrap it up?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Caruso, leaning over the fender and peering at the great engine. Glitter, he saw, had intruded even under the hood; the manifolds were chromium and the cylinder head was held in place by

thirty or forty chromium-plated bolts. The fan had twelve blades and there were two carburetors the size of gallon jugs; there was twice as much of everything, and it was twice as big as anything he had ever seen. He straightened up. "Could you just turn it over?"

"There's no battery in it," said Schaeffer. "If you want to road-test it, I could have it ready in an hour."

"No, it doesn't matter."

"She's a beautiful piece of machinery."

"She sure is," said Caruso fervently, going around to the front and staring at the radiator ornament. "You know," he went on, "with a crate like this you could just about write your own ticket, I guess. You wouldn't even have to drive it—just park somewhere and let nature take its course," and his hands outlined the abundant curves of what he meant by nature.

"I suppose you could," said Schaeffer uneasily. He was a family man and his dreams, when he had them, were more conservative, with golf and an occasional set of table tennis crowding out what Caruso had in mind. He tried to imagine the boy in the car, one hand resting negligently on the wheel, the other exploring the waist of some agreeable doxy, a dark girl, probably, with a pleasant round

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"I figure to park it in front of the house and look over the local crop. Particularly one that's a bit too snooty for her own good"

ILLUSTRATED BY CARL BOBERTZ