



The comedian's real name is Angus, and his folks were Scottish, so he comes honestly by the kilts and bagpipe—although infant son Cameron seems to have his doubts. Mrs. Young's name is Virginia

On set of *Aaron Slick from Punkin Crick*, in which Alan plays country boy who bests city slicker. Left to right, producer George Seaton, director Claude Binyon, producer William Perlberg, Young



# ALAN

He's a guy who does nothing

By LLOYD SHEARER

**A**N AFFINITY for minor mishap first fixed Alan Young in the public eye at the delicate age of six. Appearing in a school play in his boyhood town of Vancouver, British Columbia, he fell flat on his face before the footlights, just as the curtain rose. Undismayed, he gazed out at his audience and announced in solemn wonder, "What a bump *that* was!" Then he trotted off into the wings, to tumultuous applause.

Since then, there's been scarcely a day when Young hasn't tripped over an electric light cord, walked into a door, lost his keys down a grating, or attracted other trouble of a similar nature. The sight of Alan suffering another defeat at the hands of civilization has never stopped amusing people; by simply re-enacting his personal disasters before a television camera—and adding a few more that *might* have happened (and may yet)—he has become TV's most popular comedian of the beloved bumbler, or sad sack, school.

"People won't believe it," says his wife, Virginia, "but on television he's actually playing himself. Sometimes I wish CBS could set up a camera or two around the house. Within a week, I promise you, we'd have enough film for half a dozen shows. Like the time he tried to fix the plumbing."

It seems that the water, for some reason, wouldn't run in the Youngs' kitchen sink. Dreading the inevitable, Mrs. Young begged her husband to get the plumber, but Alan would have none of it. "I'm good at this sort of stuff," he said. "Where's the wrench?"

For half an hour, Alan struggled grimly with the offending pipes. Finally, thoroughly at a loss, he called the plumber. The plumber looked at the socket, said gently, "You been turning your wrench the wrong way," and proceeded to repair the sink in a matter of minutes.

Early this summer, having come to the end of a long and tiring series of television programs, Alan thought he had earned a week-end's vacation. "Why don't we," he asked his wife, "take a drive up to Apple Valley tomorrow? It's only 100 miles from Los Angeles and the change will do us good."

Actress Jean Simmons rehearses Alan for his lead role in the film *Androcles and the Lion*



# YOUNG—Beloved Bumbler

right. And that's fine, because he re-enacts his mishaps on TV, and they're hilarious

Full of enthusiasm, they climbed into their car the following morning and set out for Apple Valley. After driving 100 miles, Young stopped at a filling station. "Can you tell me," he asked the attendant, "if the Apple Valley Inn is near here?"

There was a moment's silence, and then the man pointed up the road. "That way," he said. "Two hundred miles in the direction you just come from."

Looking at Alan, it is easy to believe that the next move he makes will end in catastrophe, and this perhaps explains why he was such an immediate hit on television. Described in the trade as a "sight" comedian (one who relies on gestures and expression, rather than on witty dialogue, for his laughs), Alan is the living, breathing example of the harmless bungler he portrays on his show. His hair is lank and pale, his eyes mildly hazel, his voice high-pitched, and his manner tentative and slightly bewildered.

Young makes no bones about the fact that his comedy style was inspired by Charlie Chaplin and such other pioneer film pantomimists as Harry Langdon, Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd—although, since he is not quite thirty-one, he was unable to see these comedians at the height of their careers in silent films.

## Charlie Chaplin's Success Formula

"I once heard Chaplin explain the secret of his success," Alan confides: "Do something funny, but don't be funny while doing it.' And right there I realized that was the basis of most humor. Let a guy be smashed in the face with a pie, or have a dog bite off the seat of his pants, and the audience will scream."

According to Jack Benny, who should know, few comedians handle this sort of pseudopathetic humor better than Alan does. "Young gives his audience a feeling of comfortable superiority," Benny says.

It is only natural that the motion-picture industry, which found such a bonanza years ago in Chaplin and the other great comics of the silent era, should be scrambling for Young's services (although it wasn't always thus, for Hollywood gave him up as hopeless two years ago). Today, Alan is one of those rare performers who has simultaneous contracts with two studios. Having just finished starring in a picture called Aaron Slick from Punkin Crick, for Paramount, he is now hard at work for RKO (in between TV shows) on the movie version of George Bernard Shaw's Androcles and the Lion.

The latter picture, with its well-known story of the beast who saved the life of a man who had befriended him, is a natural for Young—at least, in the Shaw version. In his prologue to the drama, the Irish playwright presents a description of Androcles which goes, in part: "He is a small, thin, ridiculous little man who might be any age from thirty to fifty-five. He has sandy hair, watery, compassionate blue eyes, sensitive nostrils, and a very presentable forehead . . ."

With certain allowances (the comedian's eyes, for example, are not blue), the description might be that of Young, who stands just over five feet, 10 inches tall, weighs 150 pounds, and appears to be of indeterminate age. To RKO producer Gabriel Pascal, Alan fits the character of Androcles in almost every respect. "He has deep humanity, deep humility," says Pascal. "He has boyish sadness—a tender, poor-fool kind of thing."

"When Androcles is released," the producer adds, "Young will be the greatest comedian in America."

Among the others who eagerly attest to Young's personal warmth are his television writers, Nate Monaster and Stan Shapiro. Having slaved for a number of other top comedians, the two writers insist that Alan is easiest to work for—and not just because he does a (Continued on page 54)



As mermaid Jeanne Mahoney watches in disbelief, diver Young munches lunch in television skit. He accomplished this feat by quickly opening his face plate, grabbing bite, then battening hatch again

In this TV routine, comedian lost cantaloupe price war to competing grocer Cesar Romero. After Young cut price to one cent a melon, Romero bought him out, thus cornering market for whole town



PHOTOGRAPHS FOR COLLIER'S  
BY JOHN FLOREA AND BOB LANDRY





High fashion model Susie Parker, at 18, averages \$500 a week. She's at the top, but her feet hurt

## Collier's COLOR CAMERA

# The MODEL LIFE

**C**LUTCHING high hopes and small savings, some 10,000 girls every year journey to New York, the nation's mecca for mannequins, in search of the model life. They dream of joining what seems to be a glamorous and carefree parade of beautiful women followed by handsome men followed by cameras.

Of the hopeful 10,000, perhaps 100 eventually reach their goal and become top photographic models. Another 1,000 or so lose themselves in a labyrinth of wholesale and retail fashion showrooms, at an average of \$50 a week. The others are detoured completely.

The girls on these pages have made the grade in the six categories which, generally, represent the profession. And each has come to realize that modeling isn't what it's cracked-up to be.

For nineteen-year-old Edna May Thompson, who works for dress manufacturer Henry Rosenfeld, the model life is an endless series of quick dress changes for demanding buyers—at \$55 a week. Edna dreams of floor work in some plush salon. If the dream comes true she will find, like Kay McKeever of exclusive Bergdorf Goodman, that floor models get no closer to glamor than the clothes they wear and have about as much fun as a wax dummy. Kay, twenty-three, thinks photographic modeling must be a livelier art than her \$60-a-week job.

It is, according to Lynn Dalton, twenty-three, a commercial model who supplies allure for

story illustrations. More, Lynn says: "It's nerve-racking. Blinding lights and cramped muscles." For enduring the strain she gets \$20 an hour, 10-odd hours a week.

Junior fashion model Margie Sullivan, nineteen, finds it easier to make her \$20 an hour. "Young fashions are more fun than svelte stuff," she points out. "You don't have to act sophisticated to fit the clothes." In slow seasons, however, Margie works as a salesgirl to build up her average earnings to \$150 a week.

Twenty-three-year-old Annlee Danels is an advertising model specializing in lingerie. For such assignments she earns \$50 an hour, says: "At least it's good to my pocketbook." Other modeling chores help round out her income to \$250 weekly.

To all these girls, high-fashion model Susie Parker, eighteen years old and averaging \$500 a week, symbolizes the top. Yet, even in Susie's case, the dream-come-true is calloused by reality. Although she may report for work décolletaged instead of white-collared, Susie must show up at nine—to face a small army of designers, photographers, advertisers, fitters, who pin her, pose her, turn her, twist her. For her, too, hot lights are torture and every muscle rebels against impossible poses.

And this is success; this is the model model life—more work than glamor, and less bliss than blisters.

MARTHA WEINMAN

Advertising model Annlee Danels earns \$50 an hour for lingerie jobs but would rather be a singer, because "it's more creative work"

