



Underfoot In Show Business

Helene Hanff

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In her spirited, witty and vastly entertaining memoir, Helene Hanff recalls her ingenuous attempts to crash Broadway in the early forties as one of “the other 999.”

Naive, nearsighted, frequently penniless but hopelessly stagestruck, she found her life governed by Flanagan’s Law: “No matter what happens to you, it’s unexpected.” Therefore, as a prize-winning Theatre Guild protégée with a brilliant future, Helene naturally found that all the producers who were going to produce her plays didn’t, and all the agents who were going to sell her plays couldn’t.

Together with her best friend Maxine, an aspiring actress consigned to playing the comedy-ingénue in plays that regularly folded after five performances, she cultivated the “delicate, illegal art of getting everything for nothing”—from free seats to every Broadway show and neighborhood movie and borrowed outfits from Saks to voice lessons for Maxine and Greek lessons for Helene. To keep body and soul together until Broadway fame arrived, they devised an economic survival system that embraced such unlikely jobs as taking street-corner.

Reviews —

“Miss Hanff, having a good memory and a lively sense of humor, has composed a theater sketch that is realistic as well as hilarious....One of the most amusing recent theater books about the Broadway theater.”—Brooks Atkinson

“A delightful book by an irrepressible author....What really lifts the book to a high level of entertainment is the sparkling humor. To describe the incidents wouldn’t do justice to the book’s charm which comes from the style of writing and Miss Hanff’s boundless optimism.”—Library Journal

“A gay and entertaining book which also has substance.”—Boston Herald

“Hilarious and highly successful. If you need cheering up, this is it. Here’s hoping Miss Hanff finds more failures to write books about.”—Columbus Dispatch

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