

# OPERA TONIGHT

SUZANNE MASTERS

## I

Tired from the long climb to the balcony, the old lady paused on the second landing. She tugged at her worn, black hat for a moment, then started up the last flight. A polite young man met her at the top step and waited patiently while she fumbled through her leather bag for her ticket. The seat was back a little farther than she had hoped, but there was no doubt but that she could hear. Loosening her old black coat, she gazed about. From the red and gold ceiling dripped tiered crystal lights. Far below, members of the orchestra were beginning to take their places and tune their instruments. The red velvet curtain rippled above them.

The music was starting. She listened attentively as the musicians performed.

## II

Cross, the manager, hurried about giving instructions to the stupid ushers, speaking to the right people, ignoring those who started toward the stairways. It looked like a good house. The best people were there. Galleries and balcony were filled as usual. There went the press boys now. Another season like this and they could have a new curtain and some new sets. And the ceiling, the horrible gilt ceiling, could be done over. Why did an orchestra have to make such noises just to get in tune? Well, there goes the curtain. Funny people, these musicians.

# ENTERTAINMENT---TWO KINDS

ROBERT DIETZ

I walked into the theater. A snappy little blonde took my ticket. As I approached the nearest aisle another such bit of pulchritude dressed in red satin slacks said, "How far down, please?" Just as I sat down the news reel was over, the screen darkened, and the footlights shone on a gigantic velvet curtain. As the curtain was raised, revealing a brilliantly lighted stage with multi-colored backdrops, the orchestra, sitting behind dazzling music stands, played a popular theme song.

One by one the players unfolded their arrangements of popular hits. Saddle oxfords kept rhythmic time to "In the Mood" and "Oh! Johnny". A bald-headed man in the front row roared loudly at the novelty arrangement of "Ragtime Cowboy

Joe". Suddenly a soft spotlight revealed a beautiful brunette dressed in blue satin—what there was of it. As she gave her rendition of "Blue Orchids" the two in front of me nestled closer. I relaxed a little myself. But soon the curtain fell, accompanied by the usual clapping, whistling, stamping, and howling.

\* \* \* \* \*

Again I walked into a theater. A distinguished gentleman took my ticket, then handed me the seat stub and directed me to my seat. The stage was unlighted and bare except for the music stands, chairs, and a plain backdrop. As I glanced through the program, the musicians came out on the stage one by one and proceeded to tune up. Sudden applause made me