



Stuart, lifting the canvas from the easel to the light, tried to look doubtful and critical, instead of proud

# The Broken Melody

Fictionized from the Eugene O'Brien-Selznick Photoplay

By OLIVE CAREW

STUART GRANT lived in a studio in Bohemia. Now Bohemia has been said by some sage souls to be merely a state of mind, and by other scoffers, who get their notions of the world out of their morning's newspaper, to be absolutely non-existent. It has even been unkindly called a pose.

But we know better, we who have lived in Bohemia, have eaten in its tiny, smoky cellars—or not at all, have wrangled deliciously long hours with congenial spirits over a straw-covered bottle of Joe's acid red claret, have hoped, and hungered, played and toiled with youth that makes all hardships jokes, with joy that dresses poverty in the motley of light-heartedness. And, by the bye, it is as well to say here that our Bohemia is not related to that commercial, self-conscious, imitation thing of gift shops and smocks, Mad Hatter tea rooms, artists'

balls, freak hair-dressing and sight-seers, which is sometimes called by that name.

We who love Bohemia jealously guard its exact geographical location. Definiteness would let the world into our secret. "Take the Fifth Avenue bus, then turn West from the Square—" that is enough for Philistines to know. They would call our old tottering brick houses "picturesque," and—privately—"tenementy," they would rave over our work (and we know how bad it is, how far short it falls of the Glory), they would mess thru our brave, Mother Hubbard cupboards, they would trail in gaping groups up and down our stairs, in and out of our courtyards, into our attics, trample over our hopes, and our beliefs and our youngnesses.

So we will say simply that Stuart Grant lived in Bohemia. (Find the place if you can!) More definitely he lived

## THE BROKEN MELODY

Told in story form from Ouida Bergere's story produced by Selznick Pictures. Starring Eugene O'Brien. Directed by William P. S. Earle. The cast:

Stuart Grant.....	Eugene O'Brien
Hedda Dana.....	Lucy Cotton
Mrs. Drexel Trask.....	Corinne Barker
Howard Thornby.....	Donald Hall
Le Roy Clemons.....	Ivan Dawson
Musician.....	Gus Weinberg



At the third sitting she told Stuart he was a great artist and wasting his time in prosaic and stolid America

the most modern, to speak euphuistically, and in winter there was no getting away from the fact that the attic let in as much cold as in summer it let in the sun. But Stuart took these things for granted. He took it for granted that he should often not have enough in his pocket to satisfy his healthy young appetite, and that at times he should feast

under the exceeding sloping roof of a brick dwelling that was old when Washington stood on the steps of the City Hall, two miles away, and took command of his army. The plumbing was not of

Hedda was the other occupant of the attic floor. She was very small and incredibly slender and flower-dainty, and she was going to be a great singer by and by. She was going to wear Marguerite's grey robe, and sit spinning in a painted orchard at the Metropolitan and the whole world was to be at her small feet, which—to tell the truth—were very shabbily shod at present, with a great patch over one slim instep, but that is a mere detail.

She was singing the rôle now, perched on the rickety old bureau in Stuart's studio, while old Ivan, the cello player

magnificently with the proceeds of a painting—his own or one of his friends'. He took it for granted that he should fall in love frequently with some beautiful lady—perhaps in a passing limousine, or it may be the little black-eyed waitress at Joe's, and should be loved in return, and should fall out of love as harmlessly and gaily. He took it also for granted that he should rap on the door across the hall every morning at nine, and be told to enter upon a gay little attic corner, all bright with yellow tarlton and paint and fragrant with the smell of frying sausages, with Hedda—

We will come to Hedda presently.

The power to take all these things for granted is only possessed by philosophers, and young and artistic people under thirty. So you know now something of Stuart's age. But you do not know that he had an exceeding wholesome, clean young body, curly black hair, too long—not because he wanted to look artistic but because it was less expensive so, and gay, clear blue eyes that met the world trustfully, and branded him at once as a son of that merry, simple, firey race who still believe in fairies.

It was Hedda who had nick-named him "Paddie," for this same strain in him, and as Paddie the whole Quarter knew him, and loved him for his sins and his virtues and the light that came into his Irish eyes when the moon lay over the Arch, or the sun was like copper upon the old Italian beggar woman's shawl.

drew the chords of the Jewel Song from his bow, and Stuart's brush fairly danced over his canvas to the gush of silvery song. When the last of them winged into silence he flung down his brush, laughing.

"You sing that, Hedda," he taxed her, "absolutely shamelessly! You sing it *greedily*—as if you really did long for diamonds and rubies and pearls!"

She flushed, laughed lazily, not quite meeting his eyes. "Moi, je suis artiste, Monsieur!" she defended herself, "an artist must be able to pretend all the feelings in the world!"

"No. You are wrong," Ivan said suddenly from his corner, speaking crossly as he always did. "An artist must have *felt* all the feelings in the world."

"Would you have Hedda turn murderer, then, or go mad in order to sing Lucia?" asked Stuart, indignantly. "Must the poor girl break her heart for love, be rent with the pangs of jealousy, tattered with revenge, poisoned with hate? Nonsense, Ivan—look at the way Hedda just sung 'ni belle, ni demoiselle'—she couldn't have put more heart-break into it if she'd been head-over-heels in love!"

The old cello player looked deliberately at the girl, perched on the bureau. Stuart's broad, unconscious back was toward them and he did not see the confessing crimson sweep the delicate hollows of her beauty under the hard, searching old eyes that seemed to say to her, "You *do* know? You could not sing that way if you did not know love."

There was a piteous entreaty in the look she cast at him, and he only said, dryly, "Humph!" and fell to scraping at his instrument. An old man, Ivan, with the juices of life dried out of him till he seemed to rustle like a dried mullein stalk when he moved. He lived in a tiny room below the attic floor, played in an orchestra of a motion picture house, and what he thought, no one had ever been able to discover, but he watched over the two young people on the top floor zealously, and they accepted him as one of the natural facts of the world without question.

Hedda sprang down from her bureau and sauntered over to the easel, and then she gave a little cry. "Oh, Paddie!" she gasped, "Oh, Paddie, it's beautiful! I'm afraid you're going to get There first."

There was, of course, Success. But Stuart, lifting the canvas from the easel to the light, tried to look doubtful and critical, instead of proud. It was a very crude little sketch—a corner of an old Dutch garden with splashy hollyhocks and larkspur, and a

girl rocking a wooden cradle, the sun across her quaint white head-gear and her musing face, but it was done ideally, with a brush dipped into dreams. "Pretty poor

At the fourth sitting she suggested, quite casually, that he should go to Paris

stuff," he grudged it, shaking his head; "the face isn't bad, tho. I ought to chuck trying to paint real pictures and go in for portraits—pretty ladies with diamond tiaras on, or magazine covers—"

"The very idea!" cried Hedda, shocked by such profanation. "you wait, you just wait! Some day somebody will *discover* you, Paddie, and they'll hang you in the Metropolitan and they'll write books about you, and I shall be so proud to remember that I used to know you—"

"Used to?" Stuart inquired. "What's the big idea? Are you going to cut my acquaintance as soon as I get successful? Because if that's the way you feel about it, I'm just not going to be at home when Fame comes knocking!"

And at that moment Fame came knocking. The man who stood on the threshold was very much out of place there. He was all shiny broadcloth, and patent leather shoes, and silk hat, what of him was not pink flesh and pomaded black hair and smallish, knowing eyes. He had the effect of making the whole attic look rather wretched and shabby, instead of romantic. Stuart Grant did not like the way he glanced from him to Hedda either. It made him feel hot all over, he did not know just why.

"Miss Dana?" the man asked—Stuart felt an impulse to knock him over for the way he said Hedda's name. "Hm! I'm Leroy Clemons. Maybe you've heard of me, eh? Manager of the Frivols! Somebody tipped me off you could sing, eh?"



Stuart gripped his brush fiercely and painted with set jaw for many moments, quite ruining the canvas, and trying not to listen to Hedda's silver voice parading itself in the little room across the hall for Leroy Clemons. For he too had heard of Clemons, knew that he was a Power in the musical world, albeit it was in light shows in which a slim ankle was as necessary a qualification as a voice, knew that if he decided to take up Hedda and exploit her she would not have to live in garrets any longer—

"Damn! Oh damn!" he burst out suddenly, and flung his brush in a splotch of ochre upon the floor. "I thought—I wanted—"

Old Ivan, forgotten till now, crept out of his corner, thrusting his dry old face close. "You thought you were in love with her?" he asked. "You wanted to marry her perhaps?"

Stuart Grant stared at him wonderingly. "Why," he stammered, "I—believe—I believe to my soul that's exactly what I did want, tho I never realized it!"

Lose Hedda? Not hear her voice (that was like a flute in the sunshine) calling at his door, not have a little yellow-shabby room with sausages sizzling to turn to in the mornings—Preposterous. Why she was a part of Life—she was a part of *him*.

But old Ivan was persistent. "You haven't told her?" there was anxiety in his parchment face. Actually, thought Stuart resentfully, he was afraid he would marry Hedda! It couldn't be jealousy—what could it be? He was soon to learn. For in the uninflectional voice of sixty old Ivan proceeded to tell him what marriage would mean to Hedda—for "I'm not denying," said he, "that she'd marry you. Women are all fools!"—he painted the future before her, the wonderful opportunities, the success waiting for her. He made Stuart see her applauded, beautiful, surrounded with the luxury that was her due, a great singer with the world for her audience—Italy, Paris, England—and as against that brilliant picture he made him see the reverse side of the canvas, the dinginess of life as the wife of a struggling painter, living always among the poor, tawdry makeshifts that would not seem funny or romantic as they grew older.

"Do you dare to tie a woman like that to your poverty—to wash your chipped crockery for you and cook your squalid meals? What chance would Love have to live in such an atmosphere? You would see her look growing hard, and turning to indifference and then scorn, and then—hate! I know. Oh, yes," and he laughed cacklingly, "I know!"

Stuart Grant was stricken dumb. It was as tho he saw himself and his garret and the Future in new guise. His eyes were dark with the bitterness of looking on their stark nakedness. He spoke slowly, because he did not want to cry. "I—see. I'm a failure, and failures mustn't marry. It's perfectly simple. Oh, quite."

Old Ivan was pitiless; he finally extracted a promise from Stuart that he would not tell Hedda that he loved her—"if he could help it." When she came in, tremulous with the great news that Leroy Clemons had actually offered her

a part in his new musical show, she was puzzled and a trifle hurt at Stuart's silence. "Of course," she

"It is I, Hedda,"  
Stuart whispered



said apologetically, "I know it isn't much, but it's a beginning, Paddie! And everyone has to begin."

"You'll be getting your diamonds and rubies and pearls after all," he laughed, but the sound hurt her edgily; "well, this requires celebration! How about a party at Joe's tonight, with the gang all there? And perhaps we can persuade Joe to forget about prohibition for once, beef-steak, too!" He was reckless, tho she guessed that his watch would be missing the next day. His gaiety rang hollow like a drum, but she was a good sport, was Hedda. She fastened a smile before her hurt, donned the Pierrette guise of mockery and went to his party, star-eyed.

It was a very gay party indeed. Perhaps the contents of the tea cups that Joe kept filled was partly responsible. All of the guests were young, and shabby. Some of them laughed because they were happy, some of them because they were sad. The whitewash of the dingy rooms flared with fantastic shadows, toasting a shadow lady who sat upon a dais at the head of the long bare tables. Stuart, seeing them, was seized with an idea. He leaped from his seat to the fireplace and found a char of wood. With this he began to sketch roughly upon the wall where Hedda's pure profile was cut in shadow like a cameo.

He was so engrossed that he didn't notice that their seclusion had been invaded by a squad of "trippers" doing the Village, uptown women with crisp, carefully dressed hair and fragile draperies, who stared at the feasters, and whispered together and laughed stridently. From the table on the balcony where they sat one of these women could look down upon Stuart, at his fantastic work. Gracia Trask was one of those women in the twilight zone of society. She had been a trifle too much married for entire—well, respectability, and yet she had enough money, almost, to cover all her sins, and she was undeniably lovely in a finished and calculated fashion. The men of society liked Mrs. Trask, the women sniffed at her, avoided her—and invited her to their big affairs.

She had been good for a long time, nearly eleven months to be exact, and she was horribly bored. Women of her type cannot live without the appertif of love-making. She saw

Stuart Grant as soon as she entered the room, and under her shaven brows her eyes watched him with a glint in them as a tiger watches his victim before he springs.

**"Hedda, you shall have your jewels after all!"**

Joe touched the artist on the shoulder, apologetically. "Ze lady would spik to Monsieur—ze one with ze so-red hair—"

Gracia Trask smiled charmingly up into Stuart's politely questioning face. "I suppose you think I am mad!" she said, "but I am so much interested with the picture you have just made! It is really wonderful—I wonder—" she leaned forward, holding his eyes with hers, which were green and gold, like topaz—"I wonder whether you wouldn't paint my portrait. I'm frightfully vain, you know—and I want an artist who can make me perfectly beautiful!"

Stuart opened his lips to refuse, as his Artist Soul bade him, then hesitated. He thought of Hedda. He thought of Ivan, and he laughed out, harshly. What did it matter what he painted—who was there to care? "I shall be glad to paint you, Madame," he bowed.

And so Hedda sang her rôle, and Stuart, in the pale putty-and-grey apartment, smothery with patchouli, sickly with mauve draperies, painted Gracia Trask's beautiful bare bosom, and insinuating smile, and old Ivan scraped at his cello in the motion picture house. And the world wagged unfeelingly on.

At the first sitting Mrs. Trask was disarmingly girlish and confiding. At the second she discovered, without a word from Stuart, all about Hedda and was more alluring and charming than was quite fair. At the third sitting she told Stuart that he was a great artist, and wasting his time in prosaic and stolid America. "You should be in *belle Paris*; ah, that is

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where they would appreciate you!" she told him. "It is wicked for you to hide your genius in a wretched garret in the slums among all sorts of common, coarse creatures who don't *understand*—"

She used that word a great deal, and the inference was that out of everyone he knew, Gracia Trask alone really understood him. Stuart began to feel abused, and to look about his studio with dissatisfied eyes that saw for the first time the bare boards, the poor pinched, bravery of furnishing.

At the fourth sitting she suggested, quite casually, that he should go to Paris. She watered the seed thus planted at the fifth sitting by telling him that she would take him with her as her secretary, courier—or "what he pleased." But it was not until the seventh and last sitting that he consented to go. He told Ivan that evening, and was rewarded by the pale flicker of relief in the watery old eyes. It was the cello player who took Hedda the news.

"It is well," Ivan said, not appearing to notice the quiver of the red lips, the agony of the hurt brown eyes before him; "he is a great artist, and like all true artists he needs the right environment. Here—" his gesture took in the gay tarlton curtains, the painted pine furniture and made them ridiculous, "here he would stifle! His Art would either die or become prostitute to convenience. It is very well that he goes, and all his friends should rejoice that this chance has come, eh, Hedda?"

The girl sat quite still for a long moment. When she spoke her voice was composed. "You have known—I think almost before I knew, how I felt toward Stuart," she said quietly; "rather than stand in the way of his good I would go away myself and never see him again. That is what will happen now. He will go, and I shall never see him again." The pure girlish face quivered whitely into a selfless smile. "Do not be afraid, my kind friend, that I shall try to keep him—or that I would let him stay even if he wished."

They were very gay at the parting. Stuart, with his shabby portmanteau and his painting outfit, came to her door to say good-bye, and they both made prodigious efforts to pass the dangerous moment over lightly. They joked lamely about the Fame that was soon to come to each of them, they spoke casually of mutual friends of Joe's, they talked desperately of the voyage, and his chances of escaping seasickness. Then came a panicky moment when they could neither of them think of anything safe to say, because of the multitude of unsafe things that struggled to be out.

"Oh, Hedda!" Stuart said suddenly, with a great, thick sob, "Hedda—*dear*—tell me to stay! I can't go—and leave you—I *can't*—"

Then Hedda told her glorious lie, and her Guardian Angel hesitated over His

ledger, not knowing which page to place it on. "I can't tell you to stay, Stuart," she smiled—"because I don't expect to be here long myself. Clemons tells me that if I make good he will give me a hundred a week, at first, then much more. And I've got to succeed, Stuart! I want success so—more than—than anything in the world. I want money, and beautiful clothes and praise—" She forced herself to go on, tho the words choked her. "Do you remember the time you reproached me with wanting Marguerite's jewels? Well, you were right, Stuart—I do want them, and I'm going to have them!"

"Then that is how I shall remember you," he said, smiling with stiff lips, "covered with jewels—"

"He despises me," she whispered, when long after he had gone, striding erectly away down the crooked stairs, she lifted her swollen face from the sodden pillows of her couch bed. "I've cut the last strand that might hold him back—oh, God, take care of him!"

Gracia Trask was grievously disappointed with her new toy. It is difficult to feed neurotic fancy upon either gratitude or remote respect, which were the only two emotions Stuart Grant displayed to her. He was very silent on the trip over, tho he attended faithfully to her Pekingese, her rugs, her books and cushions, her steamer chair and wraps. Once in Paris he stubbornly refused to allow her to establish him in an expensive and charmingly decorated studio as she had fondly planned. Moreover, he would not dress in velveteen jackets and slouch hats, he would not drink absinthe, he would not—he simply *would* not make love to her.

How he managed to live she could not discover, for he was decidedly uncommunicative about his doings when he was away from her. Three nights a week he presented himself at the door of her pink-silk upholstered apartment on the Blois, impeccably shaven, amazingly clean and very much a man in spite of his out-of-date and shabby old evening suit. They would go out and dine, then perhaps to the theater or opera, or now and again to a reception, for the fair Gracia was almost as well known in Paris as in her native New York; afterward a grave good-night at the foolish ivory door with its bird-of-paradise knocker. No wonder the clever and accomplished Mrs. Trask was baffled.

She tried strategy. In some way she managed to learn the address of his rooms and appeared there late one afternoon, unannounced, having put the protesting concierge in his place. She found Stuart at his easel, so absorbed that even when she stood beside him, looking over his shoulder, he was unaware of her. She saw the canvas. She recognized the face. It was that which he had been limning months ago on the whitewashed

wall of the restaurant in Bohemia—Hedda's face, painted as only Love can paint.

But she tried again. She was not one to give up anything she had set her heart upon lightly. And she was not choice of her methods. She took Stuart Grant to a reception at the house of a friend of hers and arranged that in his hearing her name should be slightly mentioned with hers. She was waiting in an anteroom when he came, very pale, with thunderous brows, to find her.

"You must let me take you home," he told her briefly, "there has been—unpleasantness. I was obliged to knock a man down."

And he told her what he had overheard. She looked at him softly, even tenderly, for he was a man born to be loved of women, and, as much as she was capable, she loved him. "Well?" she asked. "Well? And what shall we do?"

If she had expected that he would perforce ask her then and there to marry him she was mistaken. He stared straight before him somberly. "I have been a cad," he said, loathing himself; "I have accepted your favors, and I have placed you in a position where people dare say wretched things, and worst of all I have profaned *myself*. I would be still more of a cad if I did not ask you to marry me, but before I do so I must tell you that there is a girl, back there in New York whom I love as a man loves only one woman in his life. I have tried to do without her, but it is like doing without part of myself. I cannot paint, I cannot even *want* to paint without her—"

Gracia Trask put out her hand and took his. In that moment she stepped out of herself. "Then go back to her," she said wearily, "if you feel that way—go back to her, and tell her to try to forgive me for taking you away . . ."

It was a fortnight later that Stuart Grant pushed open the door of his attic in Bohemia with a warm rush of happiness in his heart, as he looked about at the blessed familiar shabbiness that spelled home. Then he saw that it was freshly swept and dusted, that his easel stood ready, with a canvas on it—that there were even asters in that old blue jug on the dresser—

Footsteps on the stairs brought him about with a cry, but it was only Ivan who stood before him, gaping, rustling with every movement, as he reached out and touched his sleeve with bony fingers. Then—"Thank the good God!" Ivan said hoarsely, "you've come back in time to save her from breaking her heart."

"Her!" Stuart cried, not daring to believe, "not—Hedda?"

"Hedda." Ivan nodded, and groaned very bitterly. "I was wrong. I tried to separate you, thinking Art was enough, but it is not so. She stopped  
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Lewis Cody, H. V.

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"Oh, yes," he said, and laughing put the cigaret in its place again.

"I'm a great believer in leaving things to chance; that is, little things," he remarked. "I never have a good time when I plan on it very far ahead. I've generally found that the best way for me to enjoy myself is to start out alone feeling grumpy and dull. Pretty soon I am likely to meet some friend who feels very much the same way. 'Where are you going?' he asks. 'Nowhere,' I answer. 'Suppose we go together?' he suggests, and the result is one glad time!"

"And the big things in life?"

"Oh, chance usually takes care of them, anyhow. How many people in this room knew where they were going when they started out, do you think? Look at all the biggest names on the screen; did Chaplin think that he would be great for his comedy when all of his plans were serious ones? And Doug Fairbanks, too; wasn't it chance that showed him the thing he could do best? I believe it always happens like that: You start out to do one thing and end up by doing something entirely different."

Lew Cody, by the way, had to be argued into playing just about every good part he ever had. He did not want to get a reputation as a "heavy," which goes to show how very much there is in a name; a "heavy" could hardly hope to be a star, while a "he vamp" is a different proposition. He got the "he vamp" reputation because of his part in "For Husbands Only."

"Do I believe in marriage?" he repeated my question. "Yes, indeed I do—for other people. I think that it is a beautiful institution. But the vamp, the human butterfly type, either in man or woman, should be free, as free as possible. They simply can't rub up against the little troubles of everyday life and keep the gloss on their wings. They make perfect lovers, but impossible husbands and wives.

"For instance," he went on, "take the character I played in 'Don't Change Your Husband.' He wasn't insincere. On the contrary, he was really in love and he didn't make love to the woman in her husband's house, either. In fact, there was nothing really bad about him. He was just weak and couldn't stand up against everyday things. The very sense of irresponsibility that made him fall in love made him fall out of love again. And if, by some miracle, it were possible to make such a person sober and practical, he would probably lose all of his charm for the world."

"You think that people admire a little wickedness in their heroes?"

"I do, indeed! And in their heroines, too, so long as it isn't ugly. You know the admonition of a French mother to her child is never 'Be good,' but always 'Be pretty.' Wickedness, in the strict meaning of the word, is never pretty, so

perhaps it would be more correct to say that what people want is humanity with a little dash of fun, so that they can laugh at their own faults and at the faults of others.

"That is what I hope to do with my 'vamp' stuff; I never want to lose the light, graceful tone. And that is not easy."

"Then you are working harder than you ever did?"

"N-n-o. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy; I hate dull people and I'd hate to hate myself. Anyhow—(he was more than half in earnest)—I think that a player should to some extent, at least, live the character he is playing, in order to keep in the spirit of it. So I never want to become too serious."

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singing, as tho the spring of melody within her were broken—"he pointed at the door across the hall, "yonder she grieves, lad. Go to her—"

And Stuart waited no longer, but obeyed. As he stood upon her threshold the girl outflung on the couch sat up, stared, and her hands crept to her low girl breast. "It isn't you, of course," she said in a small, shaken voice. "It couldn't be you. You are in Paris, you know."

"It is I, Hedda," Stuart whispered, for he had come close to her now, and his arms were around her hungrily. "I can't paint pictures without you—I can't even live without you. There's just one thing that matters in the whole world, and that is—will you let me stay, sweet-heart?"

"But your work—" she was still afraid to believe in her joy.

"We will work together, Hedda," Stuart told her, "you are my work—you complete me. And perhaps—some day—if I work well enough, Hedda, you shall have your jewels after all!"

Her face was lighted with a solemn light. She seemed to be looking ahead, far ahead of them—"Yes, Paddie," Hedda nodded quietly, "I think—I shall—have my jewels—"

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Whispering, "Earth, rejoice!"  
In each matin of the lark,  
Your voice.

In each April shower,  
Crystal—clear and brief—  
Spanned by arching rainbow,  
Your grief.

In each glancing sun-ray  
On a flower awhile,  
Fleeting, transient, subtle,  
Your smile.

In your heart, soft-beating,  
Tender as a dove,  
Fluttering, prisoned in my heart,  
Your love.

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