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Los Angeles Times
5-1-1955

THAT BLONDE IN

SILK STOCKINGS



Gretchen Wyler is glad she turned out to be a Cinderella. Now at last she can wear her mink stole

By Charles D. Rice

Photographs by Zinn Archer

The hottest Cinderella story on Broadway today is Miss Gretchen Wyler, a pleasantly constructed platinum blonde who nearly disrupted the performance of "Silk Stockings," current Broadway hit.

If Gretchen were merely the understudy who got her big chance, this would be only a run-of-the-mill Cinderella story. But the fact is that she was the understudy of the understudy, a job that carries about as much prestige as tending the furnace.

Lost-Mine to Bob

It's an unheard-of series of mishaps, both the original comedienne and her understudy got knocked out of the running during the out-of-town tour. Just a few days before the Broadway opening, Gretchen was told that the part was hers, and she'd better be

good! This was a situation that would have reduced the average Cinderella to a quivering jelly. So we surmised that she must have been nervous on opening night.

"Why?" she shrugged easily. "I knew my lines!"

She's a pretty blond Cinderella.

Her role is that of a good-natured but shockingly frisky movie siren. She's about the same off-stage, though considerably less shocking, having been properly brought up in Bartlesville, Okla. Her family is "mild." She claims that they aren't really rich, but in Bartlesville you'd better own at least three colts or you'll get run out of town for vagrancy.

Along with all the other proper girls in town, little Gretchen attended Miss Runyon's Saturday Afternoon Dancing Class. And there, as Miss Runyon patiently chanted, "A heel and a toe, and a



VAMP! Gretchen turns on the charm for seductive Runyon

"JOSEPHINE": She conquers Napoleon...

one-two-three." Gretchen's dreams of glory started. She became star pupil, and when she was 13, she opened her own ballet school. At 17 she figured she had the ballet business licked, so she headed for New York to go on the stage and get famous. Surprisingly, her family thought it was a great idea.

Votes an of Two Shows

Even more surprisingly, of course, she actually did it. First she landed a chorus job in the musical, "Where's Charley?" and later another in "Guys and Dolls." Now, at 23, she's conquered Broadway.

It is true that some of her songs and dances in "Silk Stockings" express a point of view that would make Miss Runyon back in Bartlesville, but there is no question that Broadway has been con-

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