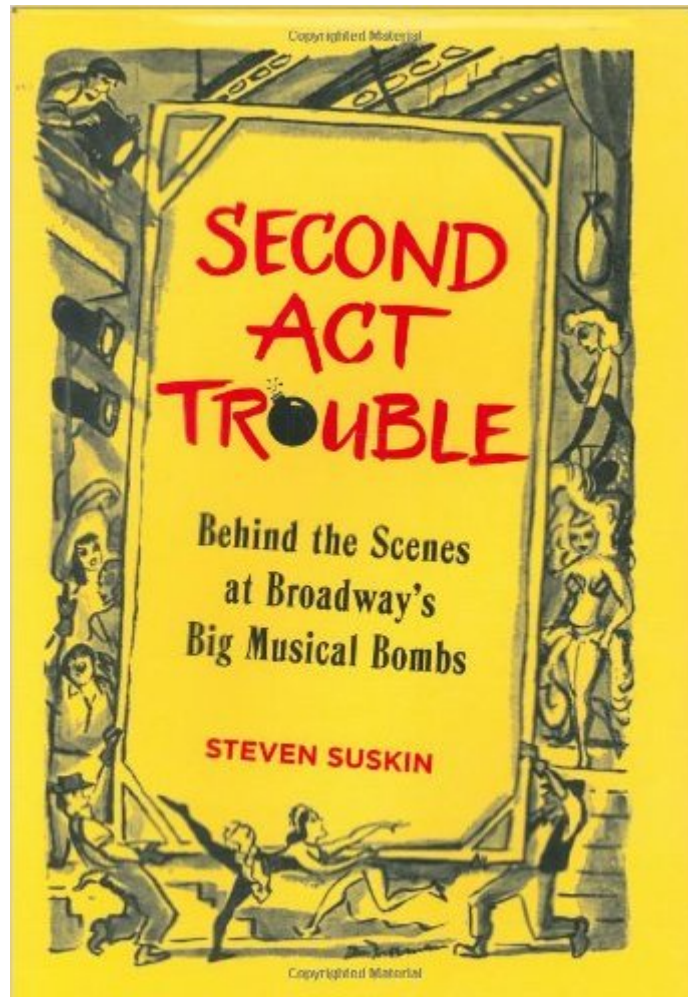


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# Second Act Trouble: Behind The Scenes At Broadway's Big Musical Bombs



## Synopsis

(Applause Books). If Broadway's triumphant musical hits are exhilarating, the backstage tales of Broadway failures are tantalizing soap operas in miniature. *Second Act Trouble* puts you with the creators in the rehearsal halls, at out-of-town tryouts, in late-night, hotel-room production meetings, and at after-the-fact recriminatory gripe fests. Suskin has compiled and annotated long-forgotten, first-person accounts of 25 Broadway musicals that stubbornly went awry. Contributions come from such respected writers as Patricia Bosworth, Mel Gussow, Lehman Engel, William Gibson, Lewis H. Lapham, and John Gruen. No mere vanity productions, these; you can't have a big blockbuster of failure, it seems, without the participation of Broadway's biggest talents. Caught in the stranglehold of tryout turmoil are Richard Rodgers, Jule Styne, Jerry Herman, Cy Coleman, Charles Strouse, John Kander, Mel Brooks, and even Edward Albee. The infamous shows featured include *Mack & Mabel*; *Breakfast at Tiffany's*; *The Act*; *Dude*; *Golden Boy*; *Hellzapoppin'*; *Nick and Nora*; *Seesaw*; *Kelly*; and *How Now, Dow Jones* .

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

William Goldman in his watershed book about Broadway called *The Season*, wrote that every Broadway show is a series of "little battles to the death". Here in Mr Steven Suskin's book, we get lowdown on the skirmishes and the all-out battles that resulted in some of Broadway's most outrageous productions. It's actors vs. directors, directors vs. composers, and everybody vs. the producers as we are taken backstage to learn why a show like Jerry Lewis' *Hellzapoppin* turned into

such a fiasco. This is not a newly written tome. Suskin has gathered a collection of contemporary articles from magazines, newspapers, autobiographies, and biographies. And that is why they are so accurate and timely. The writers were there - they talked to the participants. This is not second-hand gossip. As Edward R. Murrow used to say: "You are there." You are there when a composer/director finds his star/wife having an affair with her leading man. There when one star's part is reduced to five lines in the first act and six lines in the second act. There when a leading man is replaced with an 11-year-old boy. There when two people standing in line at the box office say they want their money back, only to hear the producer behind them say, "So do I." Among the shows covered are Kelly, Fade Out, Fade In, The Red Shoes, and....well you get the picture. Stars include Liza Minnelli, Bernadette Peters, Carol Burnett, Mary Tyler Moore...just to tap the distaff side. If you have heard a rumor about a show, it is probably discussed here and confirmed or laid to rest. Suskin helpfully includes his own comments at appropriate places in the articles. These serve to clarify and sometimes give us the end result of a particular action or person.

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