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LUCKY STAR

(40% DIALOG)

Fox production and release. Co-featuring Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell. Frank Borzage directed, from story by Tristram Tupper. Dialog by John Hunter Booth. Titled and edited by Katharine Hilliker and H. H. Caldwell. Adaptation by Sonya Levien; Lew Borzage, assistant director. Sounded by W. E. (Movietone) equipment. Runs 85 minutes at Roxy, New York, week July 20.

Timothy Osborn.....	Charles Farrell
Mary Tucker.....	Janet Gaynor
Ma Tucker.....	Hedwiga Reicher
Martin Wrenn....	Guin "Big Boy" Williams
Joe	Paul Fix
Flora	Gloria Grey
Pop Fry.....	Hector V. Sarno

Indifferent picture, bound to create a division of opinion as to its merits and box-office strength. It has the same appeal of psychological healing as in "The Miracle Man," without any healer actually figuring. Yet when the climatic physical regeneration of Charles Farrell, as a war-shattered victim, occurs, one portion of the audience is carried away by the dramatics and is applauding, while the majority is uttering unsympathetically.

A prime fault is its length. Yet there are times, despite Frank Borzage's painstaking devotion to detail and character painting, that the sluggish unfolding is barely noticed. These are the picture's strongest moments, of course.

"Lucky Star" is Borzage's first talker production. The director, with Janet Gaynor and Farrell, clicked twice before with "Seventh Heaven" and "Street Angel," both silents, excepting for the synchronized score and the theme songs. Miss Gaynor has not done any dialog but for the added talker sequences to "Four Devils," and, for that reason, many may regard this release as her first dialog production.

The femme lead has a wistfully appealing voice, while her co-star, Farrell, lacks linguistically. His is a strident, high-pitched address, not quite in keeping with his characterization, while Miss Gaynor, cast as Baa-Baa, the black sheep, is too Vassar in her inflections. And, of course, a "Black Sheep" theme song.

The last 25 minutes (about 40 per cent.) of this 85-minute exhibition include dialog and various sound effects, such as the phonograph music, choo-choo train, and attendant noises produced by physical motion, such as when Farrell attempts locomotion on his war-paralyzed legs.

Sundry discrepancies crop ever and anon, forcefully counteracting the several niceties Borzage and his players evidence. A couple of highlights when Farrell falls off his crutches produce realistic shocks to the audience's collective nervous system, in sympathy with the pitifully struggling cripple who feels the handicap of his physical condition and endeavors to steel himself into action. It is this too realistic presentation of apparently hopeless recovery that reacts negatively for the climatic fistcuffs between Farrell and Guin "Big Boy"

Williams, who does the light-heavy as a renegade ex-soldier.

There's another scene at the Halloween ball at the local hinterland Fireman's Hall, where dance music is produced by a crack Hollywood synchronizing orchestra which sounds as no Fireman's Hall band ever could.

"Lucky Star" could be helped by some speeding up through cutting, but it's still a poor programmer.

Abel