



# LILLIAN GISH

## “ORPHANS OF THE STORM” (1921)

Lillian Gish is often considered silent film's greatest dramatic actress, and her acting career spanned 85 years. One of her best-loved films is *Orphans of the Storm* where she plays a young woman from the country who brings her blind sister to Paris for medical help. (Her real sister, Dorothy, was the co-star.) The French Revolution breaks out and she and her sister are separated and subjected to danger on all sides before rescue by the famous Danton. Incidentally, director D.W. Griffith built his monumental 18<sup>th</sup> Century Paris in Westchester County, NY.



Falling snow  
Lets us know  
It's late December.  
Life's not sweet  
On the street,  
Orphans of the Storm.

Gently take my hand,  
We'll go exploring,  
Sift through city sand  
For last year's smiles.

Follow me,  
Soft and free,  
We'll find a shelter,  
Where we'll go  
Just to know  
We're not alone.

We'll weave the crowds  
Into a blanket and be warm,  
Then sleep till silence wakes  
The Orphans of the Storm.

Hark! In the square  
There's a festive air  
But a restive beat of the drum.

Is it a heartbeat of jubilation  
Or of the Terror to come?  
Stark on the green  
Stands a guillotine  
Who awaits its cue to begin.

Mobs form on the corners,  
Soldiers roam the park.  
We hide in the archways,  
Trembling until dark.

Can it be the Bastille has been taken?  
That Marie Antoinette will be forsaken?

An artillery blare  
Drowns our quiet prayer:  
Will this never end?  
Will it ever end?

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Stealthy night  
Masks our flight  
Down windswept alleys.  
Frosty morn,  
Lost, forlorn,  
We fear the day.

Then a passer-by,  
They call him Danton,  
Heeds our plaintive cry  
And guides us home.  
Precious home!

Now years have fled,  
Tears once shed  
Have misted over.  
Fear at dawn  
Long since gone  
We cheer the day.

And as the children  
Gather 'round us safe and warm,  
They'll surely ask again . . .  
About the times back then . . .  
And we'll remember when . . .  
We were  
Orphans of the Storm.  
Of the Storm.

Words by Ronn Carroll & William Perry



# MARY PICKFORD

## “POLLYANNA” (1920)

Lillian Gish’s best friend was the actress Mary Pickford, known as America’s Sweetheart, even though she came from Canada. When she married Douglas Fairbanks, they became the most famous film couple in history – even more than Brad and Angelina. Mary was just a smidge over five feet tall, so she was able to play children’s roles well into her thirties. One of these is a little girl named Pollyanna, who is eternally optimistic and believes that things will always turn out happily . . . especially when Spring is in the air!



I leap from bed every morning  
To see the green buds on the tree,  
That little squirrel in my garden  
Is wagging his tail to agree.

People complain about winter.  
When Spring is just over the hill,  
When robins and other sopranos  
Are practicing new ways to trill.

La, la, la, la, la, la

I love my my name, “Pollyanna”,  
The cheerfulest name I have heard.  
Maybe one day Mr. Webster  
Will make it a permanent word.

I just can’t help being happy  
And sharing the bright side of life.  
When I am *very* much older  
I’ll make a wonderful wife!

La, la, la, la, la, la . . .

Come to the window, there’s a view,  
Sun on the meadow fresh with dew,  
Never a shadow passing through,  
While happiness fills the world!

Just when you think it’s darkest night,  
Here come the stars alive with light,  
Telling your fear “Go fly a kite”  
‘Cause happiness fills the world!

So put on a glad face,  
Never a sad face.  
Don’t be a droopy prune!  
Think of the future  
And you will boot your  
Downhearted feelings clear up to the moon!

S’pose there’s no rainbow in the sky,  
There’ll be a rainbow by and by.  
No need to ask the reason why  
When happiness fills the world!

But if you find we  
Need to remind you,  
Here is a song you can sing:

La, la, la, la, la, la . . .



# GRETA GARBO

## “A WOMAN OF AFFAIRS” (1928)

Greta Garbo was sometimes called “The Swedish Sphinx” for her combination of beauty and reticence. A major star in silent films, she moved effortlessly into talking pictures, when audiences heard her speak for the first time, uttering “Gimme a whisky, ginger ale on the side, and don’t be stingy, baby.” She retired at the age of 35 and spent the last 49 years of her life privately living out the Garbo Mystique. Her character in *A Woman of Affairs*, co-starring John Gilbert, undertakes a reckless life when she is denied the love she seeks.



A Woman of Affairs  
Is living just upstairs.  
I pass her every day in the hall.  
She appears as a woman of mystery,  
With a history too long to recall.

Her adventures after dark,  
Provide a little spark,  
But not the heat that love can ignite.  
So she says to herself in the morning  
What she thinks when she turns out  
the light:

“Will there ever be a soul-mate to sigh for?  
With a passion-hungry life to explore?  
Will there ever be a lover to cry for  
And adore  
All the more?

I search for the right kind of man;  
Somewhere there has to be  
Someone who is the right kind of man  
For me, for me.

I live with no sensible plan,  
But, oh, the change you’ll see  
The day I have the right kind of man  
With me, with me.

Now days may be gloomy,  
And I may be low,  
But he’s coming to me,  
I know, and so

I’ll search just as long as I can,  
And in the years to be  
Some Spring will bring  
The right kind of man  
To me.  
Wait and see!”



# GLORIA SWANSON

## “FINE MANNERS” (1926)

Gloria Swanson was a major silent film star who is best remembered for portraying a major silent film star, Norma Desmond, in the 1950 classic, *Sunset Boulevard*. Swanson's roles were usually dramatic, but she was also a gifted comedienne. In *Fine Manners*, she plays a chorus girl in a burlesque show. A wealthy socialite falls in love with her, and she determines to learn about manners and culture so she can fit into his world. This song describes the learning process which, alas, is to no avail, since, it turns out, her beau prefers her as a chorus girl. Just like a man!



Excuse me, everybody,  
May I borrow you a minute?  
There's an interesting story,  
And, well, I'm the one who's in it!

You see, I've got this beau,  
Quite a wealthy joe.  
But his snooty friends, they ignore us  
'Cause I'm from "the Chorus"  
And so,  
To join that social flow,  
There's stuff I gotta know.

Now I'll study up  
On things that I must.  
It's "Goodbye humble pie"  
And "Hello Upper Crust!"

For example:

How to carve a roast,  
Make a formal toast.  
How to drop a hem,  
Polish up a gem.  
I could be an emblem of Emily Post.  
But I shouldn't boast,  
Now that she's a ghost.

How to be discreet  
When I meet and greet.  
So that I'll come up aces  
When my social graces  
Compete,  
Comin' off the street,  
Joining the elite.

Dear Uncle Binky  
Told me to raise my pinky  
When I'm at tea with biscuits and scones.  
And by the way,  
He likes to say  
"At dinner don't pick on the bones!"

Dear Auntie Mabel,  
Warned me to check the label  
Of any gown I wear when we dine,  
"Cause they can tell  
If your Chanel  
Is really a Woolworth design."

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How to be recast,  
Clearly upper-classed.  
I'll become like a vulture  
Devouring culture  
So fast,  
They will be *aghast*,  
(Lovely word, that last.)

Now opera is an art to treasure.  
Hear those divas sing.  
Three acts give three hours of pleasure.  
Three weeks, if it's "The Ring."

Mozart, you should learn each score.  
Verdi, you'll return for more.  
Wagner, you might yearn to snore.

But Tosca's fine,  
Traviata's divine,  
Unless the soprano's a bore.

How to make a start  
Recognizing art.  
Whether Rembrandt, Giorgione,  
Just Show Me the Monet!

(Sorry)

It's part  
Of what I'll know by heart,  
Pretending that I'm smart.

Dear Uncle Binky  
Taught me how I should drink, he  
Said "With champagne  
You needn't abstain.  
But rum and gin  
Can lead to sin  
And conduct you cannot explain."

He said:

"You must learn to drink like a lady,  
Take one or two drinks at the most.  
Three, you'll be under the table,  
And four, you'll be under the host."

Now it's time to trot,  
But I'm in a spot.  
When my guy comes to woo me,  
Will he like the new me  
A lot?  
Because if not,  
I'll give up the yacht,  
And revise the plot,  
So he'll want to stick with the chick  
He's already got!

Ain't I the deal!



## VILMA BÂNKY

### “THE NIGHT OF LOVE” (1927)

Vilma Bánky was discovered in her native Hungary by Samuel Goldwyn, who brought her to Hollywood. Stunningly beautiful, she was immediately hailed as “The Hungarian Rhapsody,” which explains the musical quote from Franz Liszt in the middle of this song. She was often a co-star with Rudolph Valentino, and in *The Night of Love*, a story about gypsies and, well, nocturnal passion, her leading man was Ronald Colman. Soprano arias with violin obbligato are not uncommon, but this song features a violin solo with a soprano obbligato.



There is a love in the gypsy soul,  
Love that you can't control,  
A fire burning within never to die.

And in the twilight under the stars  
Violins join hands with guitars,  
As the vagabond song of the gypsy  
Soars to the sky.

Calling:

“Come away with me  
Join a life that's free,  
Where every night will be  
A wondrous night of love!”



# BETTY BRONSON

## “PETER PAN” (1924)

In 1924 there was exciting news in Hollywood. For the first-time ever there would be a film made of Sir. James M. Barrie’s famous stage play, *Peter Pan*. The leading role was sought by superstars Mary Pickford and Gloria Swanson, even Lillian Gish. But a virtually unknown but determined teenager from New Jersey named Betty Bronson, who had studied briefly with the Ballet Russes, was personally selected by the author who admired her lightness and grace. As she had always dreamed, her name went up in lights and Bronson-mania swept the country.



When I was only half past three  
I already knew that I wanted to be  
An actor!

Later when I was ten past eight  
I often wondered if Fate  
Could be a factor.

Then I heard some news  
That awoke my heart.  
They are casting a film  
With a perfect part.

So I’ve set my sights,  
And I’ve made a plan:  
To capture the role  
Of **Peter Pan!**

I’ve been posing at my mirror,  
Acting boyishly but foxy.  
I’ve been cutting off my hair  
And wearing tights.  
And just like Peter Pan  
I can show a lot of moxie  
If that’s the pathway to the Roxy  
Where I’d see my name in lights.

I’ve been learning all the roles,  
Even Tinker Bell, the fairy.  
I’ve been dueling Captain Hook  
And staging fights.  
Now if I could meet the author,  
It might seem a little scary,  
But I’d ask Sir James M. Barrie  
If he’d put my name in lights.

My Mom says I sing like a French chanteuse,  
I studied for a month with the Ballet Russe.  
I can run like a deer,  
I can vault through the air.  
But when I come to earth  
Will I be somewhere?

I might never be a legend  
Like a Rudolph Valentino.  
There’s no way that I could hope to  
Reach such heights.  
I won’t ever thrill a crowd  
Like Babe Ruth,  
The Great Bambino,  
But on the marquee of some kino,  
You may see my name in lights:  
***Starring As Peter Pan***  
My name in lights!





# PEARL WHITE

## “THE PERILS OF PAULINE” (1914)

Pearl White in *The Perils of Pauline* popularized the idea of serial films. Running some twenty minutes in length, these serials would put Pearl and other heroines in dangerous situations that involved planes, trains, automobiles and much else. As the audiences prayed for a rescue, the screen would sometimes flash a title saying “To be continued.” *The Perils of Pauline* was filmed around Fort Lee, New Jersey, and the nearby cliffs overlooking the Hudson River, the Palisades, were an ideal setting for dangerous stunts which Pearl did herself. Little surprise that the genre invented the word “cliffhanger.”



Pearl! Danger is facing you.  
 Pearl! Bandits are chasing you  
 Off of a mountain into a ravine,  
 All in one “Perils of Pauline” . . . scene.

Pearl! Each of them has a gun,  
 Pearl! Too late to try to run,  
 Now the dam’s breaking,  
 You’ll drown in the creek . . .  
 . . . to be continued next week!

Pearl! Open your parachute!  
 Pearl! Why don’t you care a hoot?  
 Here comes an engine,  
 You’re tied to the track!  
 How will you ever get back? . . . smack!

Pearl! Swamplands will swallow you.  
 Pearl! Savages follow you.  
 Now you’re in quicksand,  
 The outcome looks bleak . . .  
 . . . to be continued next week!

Pearl, why don’t you learn to knit?  
 Pearl, dust off your sewing kit.  
 Stay out of trouble,  
 Have friends in for lunch.  
 Uh, oh! They’ve poisoned the punch . . .  
 crunch!

Pearl! That time bomb is ticking with  
 Pearl, hand-cuffed and kicking.  
 It’s two fifty-nine and it goes off at  
 three,  
 Soon you will just be debris . . . flee!

Pearl! Oceans are pounding you,  
 Pearl! Pirates surrounding you,  
 Trapped below deck when  
 Your boat springs a leak . . .

Soon they will pin you,  
 And threaten to skin you,  
 With no way to win, you  
 Through thick and through thin, you  
 Will somehow continue  
 (Don’t let me down, girl!)  
 . . . next week!



# JANET GAYNOR

## “SEVENTH HEAVEN” (1927)

Janet Gaynor was the first actress to win an Academy Award. In a two-year period she starred in three remarkable films: *Seventh Heaven*, *Sunrise*, and *Street Angel*. A romance set in Paris in World War One, *Seventh Heaven* tells the story of a homeless waif who is taken in by a poor street-cleaner. He goes off to war, and she is led to believe that he has been killed in action. Still she waits in their tiny flat in Montmartre and hopes that one day she will hear him climbing the seven flights of stairs that lead to that treasured space, their Seventh Heaven.



Paris, a crowded street,  
Where somehow  
Fate decided  
We should meet.

You saw me,  
A homeless waif,  
When you came to my side  
I felt suddenly safe

In Montmartre  
We found a place  
Up seven flights of stairs,  
A tiny space.

From our rooftop  
The sky above  
And the lights below  
Lent a golden glow  
To our love.

I'll always wait for you  
In Seventh Heaven,  
Stars will shine late for you  
To guide you near.

I'll sit and dream your face  
Till you come smiling,  
Then it will seem your face  
Was always here.

When up the winding stairs  
Soft words come wending  
On love you're sending  
To me . . .

They'll whisper you'll come home,  
That will be Heaven!  
In Seventh Heaven,  
Where else could Heaven be!

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Then came the war,  
Your regiment was summoned away  
But you promised a letter  
Would reach me each day.

And I'd take your coat  
Hang it on the back of a chair  
And I'd reach out my arms  
To pretend that you were sitting there . . .

And that you'd hold me close  
In Seventh Heaven.  
Our Seventh Heaven,  
Where else could Heaven be!

You wrote me  
Then wrote no more.  
One day a capitaine  
Was at the door.

"Your husband,"  
He gently said,  
"Has been listed as missing,  
Presumed to be dead."

Every night since  
I've cried my grief,  
But as the months have passed  
Held my belief.

There were suitors,  
I turned them away.  
And as I stood looking down  
On the roofs of our town  
I would say:  
"My love, I'll keep my promise!

And always wait for you  
In Seventh Heaven,  
Stars will shine late for you  
To guide you near.

I'll sit and dream your face  
Till you'd come smiling,  
Then it will seem your face  
Was always here."

Then up the winding stairs  
Your words come wending,

Then up the winding stairs  
Your voice is calling!

Then up the winding stairs  
I hear you singing!

Of love you're bringing  
To me . . .

I knew that you'd come back  
To Seventh Heaven!  
Our Seventh Heaven!  
Where else could Heaven be!



On the film set of *Huckleberry Finn*, the beloved Lillian Gish (“Mrs Loftus”) is joined by young Patrick Day (“Huck”) and composer-producer William Perry.

*Photo by John Seakwood*