

She came to California to play the Spanish vamp in "Blood and Sand." They're calling her the feminine Valentino. Above: the shadows of a toreador's past: Valentino and Naldi in a scene from their picture



Madame Manhattan

NITA NALDI

New York's Hollywood representative

By Mary Winship

NITA NALDI is a jealous wife's pet nightmare. Anytime wife sits at the window listening for the rattle of a taxicab and hearing instead the rattle of the milkcans, she visualizes hubby as enmeshed in the silken foils of a lady exactly like Nita.

No woman could possibly be comfortable in the same room with the man she loved, and Nita Naldi.

She suggests that she was born under the cross currents of Saturn and Venus and that she certainly should die with a stiletto between her exquisite shoulder blades.

If she ever gazes into a mirror she must realize that she is more like an orchid distilled from the seven deadly sins than an Easter lily.

As a matter of fact, this is apparently another time when looks are somewhat deceiving. She seems to be a perfectly regular, full of fun, worldly-wise New York show girl.

Do you remember that line in Kipling's "Mandalay" about "And the dawn comes up like thunder out of China 'cross the bay"?

That is the way Nita Naldi burst upon me the first day, on a scarlet and gold Spanish set, erected for "Blood and Sand" at the Lasky studio in Hollywood.

For weeks, there had been turmoil and unrest concerning the casting of the lady who vamps Ruddy Valentino in his first starring vehicle. Several actresses had made tests for it. Names had been announced and withdrawn. The picture had been held up. Hollywood's picture colony had been scoured.

Then, Nita Naldi arrived from New York, donned the sequins and shoulder straps necessary for action—and it was all over. It was Naldi's first appearance in Hollywood, and she has had exactly the same effect that throwing a brick into a peaceful pond usually has.

The combination of the thrilling sense-lure of all nations and ages—an exciting, almost ugly, almost beautiful face. Unlike anyone or anything else.

Eyes that are utterly, absurdly Chinese—black and baffling and violently aslant. A wicked, provocative Spanish mouth. High, ugly, cheek bones like those of a Russian noblewoman, that throw her whole face oddly out of focus. A strong nose with a suggestion of a Roman hook to it. Hair as black and straight and glistening as an Italian lake at midnight. Tiny, arched French feet and slim ankles. The body of a young Greek goddess.

She wore that day—she was not working—a gown of black crepe that fell back from her arms and throat in flashes of insolent, lipstick red. A black hat that made her olive skin almost swarthy. Foreign, strange, hectically fascinating.

But when she spoke—you felt (*Concluded on page 112*)



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Also in one of the pictures wherein a gentleman sat gazing into a grate fire, there appeared for a moment just above him a large reproduction of a young lady standing in a garden,—which proved that two entirely distinct photographs had been somehow confused. Obviously this new invention of animated photography has by no means been perfected.

And this, sir, is what you recommend to your readers as a means of recreation and relaxation!

I am, my dear sir, your obedient servant,
HORATIO F. X. HIGGENBOTHAM,
B. S., M. A., Ph. D.

Madame Manhattan

(Concluded from page 42)

a tense, sick pang of longing for—New York. Fifth Avenue on a spring day. The scurry amid the snow for a taxi, under the lights of Broadway, after the theater. The splendid, jagged skyline against the background of fleecy clouds. New York. She breathed it. Her voice was the voice of New York itself.

She is what she is—a product of that great melting pot.

"I had a lot of Latin ancestors of one kind and another," remarked Miss Naldi, "but I was born in New York."

Then it was easier still to place her. And I found I was right. On the end, front row, in the Winter Garden—the Midnight Frolic.

"It's all right out here," she said, "but I've got a kid sister back in New York. She's all the family I have and I'm all she's got. I take care of her. I hate being away. You know how it is."

She left the chorus to play opposite Owen Moore and Eugene O'Brien, and she was in "Experience" last year. Since she arrived and has worked under Fred Niblo, there has been much talk of a big future for her. They are calling her the female Rodolph Valentino.

"She's the most interesting personality I've seen in some time," June Mathis, the famous scenario writer, said to me, "I'd love to write for her."

Motion Picture Axioms

No pure girl can hold a job because of the unwelcome advances of her employer.

All lady's maids look like Ziegfeld Follies girls.

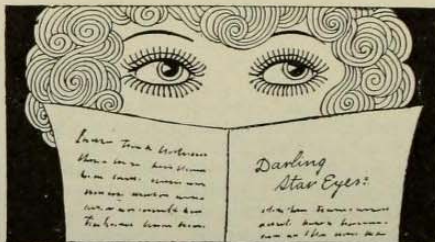
All houses in the country are dependent for their water-supply on an old-fashioned rustic well at which the daughter of the house spends most of her time.

No house ever catches fire that some young lady in a kimono is not overcome by smoke in a room on the top story.

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Men convalescent from surgical operations invariably have their heads swathed in bandages.



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