

What I Learned about Men from the MOVIES

by
Nita Naldi

Popular screen star tells how she received post graduate course in masculine peculiarities during her career on the screen

An interview with
Regina Cannon

NITA was late. It isn't a habit with her—nor an affectation, nor a conscientious observance of the "what you can get away with and still be correct" rules in the Book of Etiquette. Like herself, she can just sit around waiting for it to come time to start for a place, and then be late. We can appreciate and even sympathize with her in this respect, for the things we simply cannot do are to be on time and look smart in our limited wardrobe.

But in the little matter of gilding the lily—as the art of wearing clothes is sometimes called—Nita has it all over most of the cinema celebrities. She always looks like a million dollars—off the screen as well as on. She is one of the few stars who are as good-looking out of pictures as prepossessing when appearing in them.

To us, Nita Naldi is the stunningest-looking girl we've ever seen. Her features are so perfect that they seem chiseled, and she has skin as smooth and as unblemished as a baby's. Incidentally, Time hasn't had a chance to mar her beauty, for Miss Naldi only celebrated her twenty-fourth birthday on April Fool's Day, which, by the way, is a little annoying to Nita, for while April 1st is as good a day as any for a birthday, still there are 364 days in the year that haven't become a historical, not to say hysterical, joke.

Well, as we said, Nita was as late and as smart-looking as ever. She didn't attempt to apologize, for we had given her an understanding look.

"Let's get a corner table," she suggested, "if there's such a thing to be had at this hour." And there was. "Now," she continued approvingly, "I like the way you don't fuss about having had to wait. A man would, I think. That is, if he knew you well enough to call attention to your faults—and I suppose if he didn't know you well, you wouldn't have any faults."

"You seem to have the low-down on men," we said with admiration.

"Oh, one does learn something of men from the movies," replied Miss Naldi. "And one of the things one learns early and often is that men are

delightful to work with. They have no petty jealousies. They are a help, not a hindrance. They don't up-stage a woman—and up-staging means taking the best position for themselves."

"Parking right in front of the camera," we suggested.

"Right," agreed Nita. "A woman star will generally see that there's 'nothing to be desired' from the angle at which she is photographed. The other feminine members of the company can get 'shot' from any disadvantageous position they may happen to be in, as long as she looks as picturesque as a Gainsborough landscape to the camera's eye.

MEN stars, on the other hand, know it is to the advantage of the picture for the leading lady to look her best. They 'play up' to her, in the vernacular of the studio. If her profile is good, they'll see that she gets plenty of opportunity to turn it towards the camera. If she is

"As a sex," said Miss Naldi, "men are much more willing to give the other fellow a chance than women are."

prettiest when looking at the camera, the male star will try to see that she gets her close-ups from that position.

"There is no one," continued Miss Naldi, "more generous in this respect than Mr. Valentino. When I worked with him in 'Blood and Sand,' I was new to the ways of the screen and the tricks of the camera. Rudy could have up-staged me at every turn of the camera's crank and I wouldn't have been any the wiser. He did not, as a woman star might have done, take advantage of my ignorance. He played the big scenes with me in the foreground, and I think that no small part of his success is due to his generosity and willingness to co-operate with other members of the cast."

"In other words, he doesn't hog the whole picture," we remarked.

INDEED he doesn't," agreed our hostess. "And in this respect John Barrymore is like him. My first part in pictures was with Mr. Barrymore in 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,' and I must say that Mr. Barrymore displayed the patience of Job as far as I was concerned. He went over our scenes together until I'd gotten them down as nearly perfect as a novice can ever hope to get a scene. I'm glad to be able to thank him publicly for the part in my success—if it can be called a success—that he has played. For if Mr. Barrymore hadn't been so kind and considerate about helping me, my screen career might have ended with 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,' for it was through my work in that production that I was offered other roles."

Right about here we thought that if Nita Naldi ever tires of acting before the camera, she might turn press agent for Rudy or Jack Barrymore, for she was so sincere and earnest in singing their praises that one just *knew* she meant every word of it. Incidentally, we feel that this beautiful girl is herself generous to a fault and she seems never to forget a kindness.

But Nita is no Polyanna, going around loving the world in general. If she doesn't like a person, she'll say so, like any human being who is not a hypocrite.

"Rod La Rocque," she went on, "is a fine young actor. He has years of stage training to rely on and is a splendid technician. We played together in 'Don't Call It Love,' and he is a joy to work with. He doesn't attempt to take what isn't his and will always give the woman the best position before the camera if to the picture's advantage."

"Nita," we asked, "are all the men nice to work with, and all the women difficult?" we asked.

"That's the point," replied Miss Naldi with animation, "all the men I've happened to work with have been fine. Of course there are a good many I haven't played opposite and they may not have the world's best dispositions, but on the whole, men are more satisfactory and less temperamental, as a sex, to work with than women stars. Anyway, that's my story," finished Nita, "and I'll stick to it!"