

Topic Page: [Loos, Anita \(1888–1981\)](#)

Summary Article: **Loos, Anita (1888 Mount Shasta, CA-1981 New York City)**

From *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Women in Early American Films: 1895-1930, An*

Anita Loos, considered by some to be a writing prodigy as a child, was one of the most prolific writers in Hollywood during the early years of the film industry. She wrote over 100 scripts in four years (1912-1915), and only four were not made into movies.

Loos was a teenage actor when she saw a film and decided she could write a better one. She spent a morning writing a scenario then sent it off to the American Biograph Company—an address she found on a film canister. Two weeks later she received an acceptance letter and her writing career began.

D. W. Griffith directed the resulting film, *The New York Hat* (1912), and she worked regularly for Biograph until 1916, during which time she wrote over 100 scenarios and the accompanying title cards. Known for her wit, in 1916 when she wrote the film adaptation of *MacBeth*, the credits read “by William Shakespeare and Anita Loos”. She is credited with being the first person to use verbal humor on title cards.

Loos is perhaps best remembered as the author of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1928), which was made into two films and spawned a sequel-of-sorts in *Gentlemen Marry Brunettes* (1955). In 1926 she also wrote the play *The Whole Town's Talking*, which she later adapted as a film for the screen, titled *The Ex-Bad Boy* (1931).

In addition to her work writing plays and scripts, Loos wrote several books on her life and career, including *A Girl Like Me* (1966), *Kiss Hollywood Good-Bye* (1974), and *Cast of Thousands* (1977). She also wrote two books about working in Hollywood, titled *How to Write Photoplays* (1920) and *Breaking Into the Movies* (1921). Although she supposedly wrote the books in collaboration with her (then) husband John Emerson, later it was discovered that he often made her put his name to works that he did no actual work on.

Although she was an independent woman earning her own way in a “man's world,” Loos never aligned with the feminist movement. Her writing, while amusing and satirical, never placed women in roles that were not socially acceptable. Whether she actually believed that women should be subservient to men is not clear, but controlling men populated her personal life.

Less remembered is the fact that Loos produced several films in the last years of the 1910s. Her first production effort was *Come On In* (1918), a film that she also wrote. In the next two years she produced five other films and then, inexplicably, returned to screen-writing.

Film Credits

1912	<i>The Earl and the Tomboy; He Was a College Boy; The New York Hat; The Power of the Camera; The Road to Plaindale; My Baby; The Musketeers of Pig Alley</i>
	<i>The Telephone Girl and the Lady; The Mistake; All for Mabel; All on Account of a Cold; A Bunch of Flowers; A Cure for Suffragettes; Fall of Hicksville's Finest; A Fallen Hero; The Fatal Deception; A Fireman's Love; For Her</i>

1913	<i>Father's Sins; Gentlemen and Thieves; The Great Motor Race; A Girl Like Mother; A Hicksville Epicure; His Awful Vengeance; His Hoodoo; A Horse on a Bill; How the Day Was Saved; The Lady in Black; The Making of a Masher; The Mayor Elect; The Mother; A Narrow Escape; Pa Says; The Path of True Love; Queen of the Carnival; The Saving Grace; The Suicide Pact; Two Women; Unlucky Fim; The Wall Flower; The Wedding Gown; When a Woman Guides; The Widow's Kid; Yiddish Love; The Power of the Camera; Highbrow Love; Bink's Vacation</i>
1914	<i>At the Tunnel's End; A Balked Heredity; A Blasted Romance; The Chieftain's Daughter; A Comer in Hats; The Deceiver; The Deadly Glass of Beer; A Hicksville Reformer; The Fatal Curve; The Fatal Dress Suit; A Flurry in Art; The Girl in the Shack; His Hated Rival; His Rival; How They Met; The Last Drink of Whiskey; A Life and Death Affairs; The Meal Ticket; The Million-Dollar Bride; Mortimer's Millions; Nearly a Burglar's Bride; Nell's Eugenic Wedding; Nellie, the Female Villain; A No Bull Spy; The Saving Presence; The School of Acting; The Sensible Girl; The Stolen Masterpiece; The Style Accustomed; The Suffering of Susan; Where the Roads Part; The White Slave Catchers; The Gangster of New York; For Her Father's Sins; The Hunchback</i>
1915	<i>The Deacon's Whiskers; The Burlesquers; The Cost of a Bargain; The Fatal Fingerprints; The Fatal Fourth; Heart That Truly Loved; How to Keep a Husband; Mixed Values; Mountain Bred; Nellie, the Female Victim; Pennington's Choice; Sympathy Sal; The Tears on the Page; Wards of Fate</i>
1916	<i>American Aristocracy; A Calico Vampire; A Comer in Cotton; French Milliner; The Half-Breed; His Picture in the Papers; Intolerance; Laundry Liz; Manhattan Madness; MacBeth; The Matrimaniac; The Social Secretary; Stranded; The Wharf Rat; Wild Girl of the Sierras; The Mystery of the Leaping Fish; The Children Pay; The Little Liar; The Americano</i>
1917	<i>Down to Earth; In Again, Out Again; Reaching for the Moon; Wild and Woolly; A Daughter of the Poor</i>
1918	<i>Come On In; Goodbye Bill; Hit the Trail Holiday; Let's Get a Divorce</i>
1919	<i>Getting Mary Married; The Isle of Conquest; A Temperamental Wife; A Virtuous Vamp; Under the Top; Oh, You Women!</i>
1920	<i>The Branded Women; In Search of a Sinner; The Love Expert; The Perfect Woman; Two Weeks; Dangerous Business</i>
1921	<i>Mama's Affair; A Woman's Place</i>
1922	<i>Polly of the Follies; Red Hot Romance</i>

1923	<i>Dulcy</i>				
1924	<i>Three Miles Out</i>				
1925	<i>Learning to Love</i>				
1927	<i>Publicity Madness; Stranded</i>				
1928	<i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (I)</i>				
1929	<i>The Fall of Eve</i>				
1931	<i>The Struggle; The Ex-Bad Boy</i>				
1932	<i>Blondie of the Follies; Red-Headed Woman</i>				
1933	<i>The Barbarian; Hold Your Man; Midnight Mary</i>				
1934	<i>The Cat and the Fiddle</i>				
1935	<i>Biography of a Bachelor Girl; The Girl from Missouri; The Social Register</i>				
1936	<i>San Francisco; Riffraff</i>				
1937	<i>Mama Steps Out; Saratoga</i>				
1938	<i>Alaska; The Great Canadian; The Cowboy and the Lady</i>				
1939	<i>The Women; Babes in Arms; Another Thin Man</i>				
1940	<i>Susan and God; Strange Cargo</i>				
1941	<i>Blossoms in the Dust; They Met in Bombay; When Ladies Meet</i>				
1942	<i>I Married an Angel</i> 1945	<i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i> 1953	<i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> 1955	<i>Gentlemen Marry Brunettes</i> 1958	<i>Gigi</i>

Producing Credits

1918	<i>Come On In; Goodbye Bill</i>
1919	<i>A Temperamental Wife</i>
1920	<i>In Search of A Sinner; The Love Expert; Dangerous Business</i>

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