Directed by G. W. Pabst
Written by Rudolf Leonhardt (screenplay), based on the novel by Margarete Böhme
Produced by Georg Wilhelm Pabst
Music by Otto Stenzeel
Cinematography by Sepp Allgeier and Fritz Arno Wagner
Art Direction by Emil Hasler and Ernö Metzner

Cast
Louise Brooks ... Thymian
André Roanne ... Count Nicolas Osdrorff
Josef Rovensk ... Robert Henning
Fritz Rasp ... Meinert
Vera Pawlowa ... Aunt Frieda
Franziska Kinz ... Meta
Arnold Korff ... Elder Count Osdrorff
Andrews Engelmann The director of the establishment
Valeska Gert ... The director's wife
Edith Meinhard ... Erika
Sybille Schmitz ... Elisabeth
Sig Arno ... Guest (as Siegfried Arno)
Kurt Gerron ... Dr. Vitalis


Fritz Arno Wagner (Cinematographer)

Louise Brooks ... Thymian

André Roanne ... Count Nicolas Osdorff
Josef Rovensk ... Robert Henning

Fritz Rasp ... Meinert

Vera Pawlowa ... Aunt Frieda (b. unknown—d. unknown). Varya Pawlowa appeared in 4 films including 1930 The Ring of the Empress, 1929 Diary of a Lost Girl, 1926 Superfluous People, 1924 Die Macht der Finsternis.


Pabst, G(EORG) W(ILHELM) (August 27, 1885-May 29, 1967, Austrian director and scenarist, was born in Raudnitz, Bohemia then part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, now in Czechoslovakia. His father, August, was a railroad official whose career took the family to Vienna when Pabst was still a child. At his father’s urging he first studied acting. He soon abandoned this, toyed for a time with the idea of a military career, and finally—to his parents’ distress—opted for the stage. In 1904 he entered the Vienna Academy of Decorative Arts, where he studied acting for two years. In 1910, after varied experience at theatres in Switzerland and Germany, Pabst went to the United States to join the Deutsche Volkstheater in New York, appearing in plays by Hauptmann, Schnitzler and others. The theatre was controlled by labor unions and he met a number of prominent American socialists, including Upton Sinclair. It was at the Volkstheater that Pabst first tried his hand as a director, soon realizing that he had a much greater talent for this than as an actor. In 1914 he returned to Europe to recruit new performers but, with the outbreak of war, was detained in France as an enemy alien. Pabst spent nearly five years in a prison camp near Brest, where he organized a theatre company and presented French plays for the entertainment of prisoners and guards alike. In this way he acquired his lifelong admiration for French culture, but his imprisonment was nevertheless a painful experience which marked him deeply.

Released at the end of the war, Pabst directed a
season of plays in Prague, including two controversial works by Franz Wedekind. His stage productions at the time are said to have been in the Expressionist style then dominant in Germany. In 1920 he became artistic director of a Vienna theatre, the Neuen Wiener Bühne, where he staged avant-garde plays by Sternheim and Georg Kaiser among others. It was the German cinematographer and film pioneer Carl Froelich who brought Pabst into the cinema. When Froelich formed his own production company, he gave Pabst an acting role in his first movie Im Banne der Kralle (1921), then took him on as assistant director and scenarist of Der Taugenichts (1922) and Luise Millerin (1922).

Pabst’s first film as a director followed in 1923, Der Schatz (The Treasure)….Der Schatz did poorly at the box office and Pabst’s next assignment, secured for him by Froelich, was a routine commercial vehicle for the popular actress Henny Porten, Gräfin Donelli (Countess Donelli, 1924). It was made very quickly and cheaply, but enjoyed great popularity and commercial success. Its producers, Maxim Films, urged Pabst to make other similar entertainments, but he had no wish to settle into a rut as a commercial director, and was looking for a story that would allow him to express his developing social consciousness. He found it in Die feudlose Gasse (The Joyless Street), a controversial novel by the Viennese journalist Hugo Bettauer, and in due course also found backers for what developed into an extremely ambitious project.

Bettauer’s novel, originally a serial, is a portrait of Viennese society in the postwar period of inflation, which brought an accelerating breakdown in economic, social and moral values. Pabst engaged Willi Haas to write the script and Guido Seeber as his photographer, signing Werner Krauss and Asta Nielsen as his stars. He also selected Valeska Gert, a popular cabaret entertainer, to play the madam of a brothel, and agreed to pay the then outrageous sum of $4,000 for the services of an almost unknown young actress named Greta Garbo, whose promise he had recognized in Mauritz Stiller’s The Saga of Gösta Berling….

For the most part, The Joyless Street eschews Expressionist symbolism and indeed it has been recognized as an important contribution to a very different movement—the so-called “Neue Sachlichkeit” (New Objectivity). The term had been coined in 1924 to define the glum realism that had emerged in painting as a reflection of a national mood of disillusionment. Reacting against the Expressionists romantic probing into the depths of the human psyche, the artists of the Neue Sachlichkeit limited themselves to a resigned scrutiny of what people did to each other in visible and material terms, refusing speculation about why. “What need is there for romantic treatment?” Pabst asked once. “Real life is already far too romantic, too disturbing.”…

But in 1925 the film’s unblinking portrayal of squalor and depravity was startling. In spite of the wholesale mutilations imposed by the censors of various countries, it was a major international success, establishing Pabst as a significant figure in world cinema, and in particular as a brilliant director of women….

In the course of his career Pabst became involved in an assortment of political and cultural movements, but his deepest concern as a filmmaker was always the revelation through visual images of human character. He was greatly interested in psychology and psychoanalysis….

Ever since he had staged Wedekind’s play Erdgeist in Prague just after the war, he had wanted to film it and its companion piece, Die Büchse der Pandora. In 1928 he saw a couple of Paramount movies featuring a young starlet named Louise Brooks and recognized in her the combination of intelligence and intuition, innocence and eroticism, that he saw in Wedekind’s Lulu. As it happened, she had just been refused a salary increase by Paramount and at once accepted Pabst’s offer. “In Berlin,” she later recalled, “I stepped to the station platform to meet Mr. Pabst and became an actress,…It was just as if Mr Pabst had sat in on my whole life and career and knew exactly where I needed assurance and protection.” Discussing Pabst’s directorial technique, she said, “it was the stimulus that concerned him. If he got that right, the actor’s emotional reaction would be like life itself….by some magic he would saturate me with one clear emotion and turn me loose.”

Die Büchse der Pandora (Pandora’s Box, 1928) was drawn by Ladilaus Vajda from Wedekind’s two Lulu plays (which also inspired Alban Berg’s great opera Lulu). In his demimondaine Lulu, Wedekind created a “personification of primitive sexuality” who uses up and destroys the men that love her until she meets an even more destructive sexual monster than herself, Jack the Ripper. Where Berg in his opera heightened the theatricality of the
plays, Pabst and his scenarist subdued them to a more subtle and cinematic naturalism. However, Pabst does not hesitate to use Expressionist devices when they suit his purpose—especially towards the end of the film, as in the extreme chiaroscuro of the floating casino, or the disturbing psychological details picked out by the camera as Jack is briefly distracted from his need to kill by Lulu’s irresistible sexuality.

Other scenes seem closer to Impressionism, like the sequence in which Lulu takes part in a cabaret. Lotte Eisner wrote of this that “nobody has ever equaled Pabst’s portrayal of the backstage fever on the opening night of a big show, the hurrying and scurrying between scene changes…the rivalry, complacency, and humour, the bewildering bustle of stage-hands and electricians—a stupendous whirl of artistic aspiration, colourful detail, and a facile eroticism ….Lulu appears like some pagan idol, tempting, glittering with spangles, feathers and frills, against a wavering, out-of-focus background.”

Pandora was cruelly mutilated by the censors, but it was only partly for this reason that contemporary reviewers greeted it so coolly. Some were shocked, others regretted Pabst’s apparent retreat from political engagement; many concluded that “Lulu is inconceivable without the words that Wedekind made her speak.” More recently—with different preconceptions and with something like a complete print to study—critics have recognized “the miracle of Louise Brooks” and the dimensions of Pabst’s achievement, marred though it is by a lack of stylistic unity. Lee Atwell wrote that “Pabst’s film reincarnates Lulu as a modern myth, Pabst sees her as a dangerously free and alluring innocent, without any notion of sin in the Christian sense…a liberated figure of pure untrammelled feminine desire.” The movie has been compared with Carl Dreyer’s Passion of Joan of Arc “for the intense, intimate way it uses the camera to watch the processes of thought and feelings through close shots of the face.”

In 1929 Pabst co-directed with Arnold Fanck Die Weisse Höhle vom Piz Palü (The White Hell of Piz Palü). Starring the young Leni Riefenstahl, it proved one of the most successful of Fanck’s exciting “mountain films.” The same year Pabst returned to his own concerns in Das Tagebuch einer Verlorenen (Diary of a Lost Girl), based on a best seller by Margarethe Böhme. Undeterred by the reception given to Pandora, he starred Louise Brooks in another study of a sexually generous girl. She plays Thymiane, a pharmacist’s daughter made pregnant by his wicked assistant (Fritz Rasp) and incarcerated for this sin in a reform school run by a voyeur and a sadist (Valeska Gert). Escaping in the midst of a rebellion, Thymiane winds up in a brothel. There are two conclusions to the story: one in which Thymiane, rejecting spurious respectability, herself becomes the madam of a brothel, and another, substituted by Pabst to secure the film’s release in Germany, in which she marries the old Count Osdoft but retains her courage and honesty.

Freddy Buache has described Thymiane’s initial seduction in the brothel as “one of the purest, most iridescent, and the most ineffably magnificent in the cinema’s collection of erotica.” Even more directly than in Pandora, Pabst contrasts the basic innocence and honesty of his “lost girl” with the hypocrisy and decadence of bourgeois society, though Kracauer and others complained that he does not take his social criticism far enough and instead “elaborated on the decadence itself.” There is little of the Expressionist virtuosity or atmospheric richness of Pandora in this film, which is characterized by an almost documentary restraint and a new concern for stylistic unity.

By this time, the movies were becoming talkies. Pabst said some years later that he remained “convinced that in the cinema, the text counts for little. What counts is the image.” He nevertheless recognized that sound could not be ignored and in 1929 went to London to study the new production methods. He reached the conclusion that the early talkies he saw there merely exploited sound as a novelty instead of recognizing it as an addition to the filmmaker’s vocabulary.

Returning to Germany early in 1930, he began work on his own first sound film, Westfront 1918, adapted by Ladislaus Vajda and P. M. Lampel from Ernst Johannsen’s anti-war novel Vier von der Infanterie…

Though he had long been regarded as a realist director, it was in this grim and powerful film that Pabst achieved for the first time the goals of the “New Objectivity,” with none or few of the concessions to picturesqueness and sentimentality that marred other war films of the period (as well as many of his own earlier pictures). It was released in May 1930 at a time when Germany was already gearing itself for another great war, and Pabst’s insistence on the futility and dreary monotony of militarism was not welcomed by most German critics, though the movie was greatly admired in Britain and France.

…Like René Clair in his first sound films, Pabst reduces dialogue to a minimum, concentrating instead on gesture and image…

Returning to the style of Westfront, Pabst made one of his finest films in Kameradeschaft (Comradeship, 1931). Set in the immediate postwar period, it is based on an
incident that actually occurred in 1906, when German miners crosses the border to help rescue French miners trapped underground in a disaster at Courrières. The theme lent itself to Pabst’s humanistic distaste for the growing nationalism of the 1930s, and the film was organized in a Franco-German coproduction, with French and German actors speaking their own languages throughout. …

*Kammeradeschaft* has been recognized as a masterpiece of fictional documentary and was an important influence on such British directors as Basil Wright and Humphrey Jennings. In France, it brought Pabst the Legion of Honor. In Germany, however, the film was condemned by the reactionary press as unpatriotic and it failed at the box office. Finally disillusioned, Pabst went to France.

None of Pabst’s later films equaled the major achievements of his first German period, but some are of considerable merit. …

Pabst’s reputation has never recovered from the fact that he elected to spend the war years in Austria and Germany. According to his wife, he had in fact intended to emigrate to the United States, but at the last moment was trapped in Europe by a traveling accident. There is evidence to support this claim, but he was also the only great German cinéaste of the prewar period to make films under the Nazis, and this has been found harder to justify. …

After the war, Pabst remained for a time in Austria. *Der Prozess (The Trial, 1947)* is set in nineteenth-century Hungary and centers on a lawyer famous for his defense of Jews persecuted during a wave of anti-Semitic hysteria. Like *Paracelsus*, it has been much praised for its cinematic qualities (which brought Pabst the award as best director at Venice in 1948), but rancorously attacked on ideological grounds. One French reviewer remarked that Pabst “defends the Jews… but ten years too late.” It should be said that he had been anxious to make a movie on this theme as early as 1933, but had been then unable to obtain French backing for the project. …

Jean Renoir said in 1963 that Pabst “knows how to create a strange world, whose elements are borrowed from daily life. Beyond this precious gift, he knows better than anyone else, how to direct actors. His characters emerge like his own children, created from elements of his own heart and mind.” …

Louise Brooks described her mentor as “a short man, broad-shouldered and thick-chested, looking heavy and willful in repose. But in action his legs carried him on wings which matched the swiftness of his mind.” Alexandre Arnoux said that he possessed “a Viennese charm that nobody I know can resist, an extraordinary power of seduction, the demon of intelligence in his look and a certain fullness and direct humanity that pierces the soul.”


From the Introduction

. . . When she got back to Paris, Pabst called her from Berlin. *Prix de Beauté*, he said, was postponed; instead, she would star under his direction in *The Diary of a Lost Girl*, at precisely half her present salary (a thousand dollars a week). As submissive as ever to her tutor, she arrived in Berlin aboard the next train.

Lovingly photographed by Sepp Allgeier, Brooks in *Lost Girl* is less flamboyant but not less haunting than she is in *Pandora’s Box*. The traffic in movie actors traditionally moved westward, from Europe to Hollywood, where their national characteristics were sedulously exploited. Brooks, who was among the few to make the eastbound trip, became in her films with Pabst completely Europeanized. To be more exact: in the context that Pabst prepared for her, Brooks’ American brashness took on an awareness of transience and mortality. The theme of *Lost Girl* is the corruption of a minor—not by sexuality but by an authoritarian society that condemns sexuality. (Pabst must surely have read Wilhelm Reich, the Freudian Marxist, whose theories about the relationship between sexual and political repression were hotly debated in Berlin at the time.) It is the same society that condemns Lulu. In fact, “The Education of Lulu” would make an apt alternative title for *Lost Girl*, whose heroine emerges from her travails ideally equipped for the leading role in *Pandora’s Box*. Her name is Thymiane Henning, and she is the sixteen-year-old daughter of a prosperous pharmacist. In the early sequences, Brooks plays her shy and faunlike, peering wide-eyed at a predatory world. She is seduced and impregnated by her father’s libidinous young assistant. As soon as her condition is discovered, the double standard swings into action. The assistant retains his job, but, to save the family from dishonor, Thymiane’s baby is farmed out to a wet nurse, and she herself is consigned to a home for delinquent girls, run by a bald and ghoulish superintendent and his sadistic wife.

Life in the reformatory is strictly regimented; the inmates exercise to the beat of a drum and eat to the tapping of a metronome. At length Thymiane escapes from
this archetypal hellhole (precursor of many such institutions in subsequent movies, e.g. Mädchen in Uniform) and goes to reclaim her baby, only to find that the child has died. Broke and homeless, she meets a street vendor who guides her to an address where food and shelter will be hers for the asking. Predictably, it turns out to be a brothel; far less predictably, even shockingly, Pabst presents it as a place where Thymiane is not degraded but liberated. In the whorehouse she blossoms, becoming a fille de joie in the literal sense of the phrase. Unlike almost any other actress in a similar situation, Brooks neither resorts to pathos nor suggests that there is anything immoral in the pleasure she derives from her new profession. As in Pandora, she lives for the moment, with radiant physical abandon. Present love, even for sale, hath present laughter, and what’s to come is not only unsure but irrelevant. I agree with Freddy Buache when he says of Brooks’s performances with Pabst that they celebrated “the victory of innocence and amour-fou over the debilitating wisdom imposed on society by the Church, the Fatherland, and the Family.” One of her more outré clients can achieve orgasm only by watching her beat a drum. This ironic echo of life in the reform school is used by Pabst to imply that sexual prohibition breeds sexual aberration. (Even more ironically, the sequence has been censored out of most of the existing prints of the movie.) Brooks is at her best—a happy animal in skintight satin—in a party scene at a nightclub, where she offers herself as first prize in a raffle. “Pabst wanted realism, so we all had to drink real drinks,” she said later. “I played the whole scene stewed on hot, sweet German champagne.”

Hereabouts, unfortunately, the film begins to shed its effrontery and to pay lip service to conventional values. Thymiane catches sight of her father across the dance floor; instead of reacting with defiance—after all, he threw her out of his house—she looks stricken with guilt, like the outcast daughter of sentimental fiction. In her absence, Papa has married his housekeeper, by whom he has two children. When he dies, shortly after the nightclub confrontation, he leaves his considerable wealth to Thymiane. Nobly, she gives it all to his penniless widow, so that the latter’s offspring “won’t have to live the same kind of life that I have.” Thereby redeemed, the former whore soon becomes the wife of an elderly aristocrat. Revisiting the reform school, of which she has now been appointed a trustee, she excoriates the staff for its self-righteous cruelties. “A little more kindness, her husband adds, “and no one in the world would ever be lost.” Thus lamely, the movie ends.

“Pabst seemed to lose interest,” Brooks told an interviewer some years afterward. “He more or less said, ‘I’m tired of this picture,’ and he gave it a soft ending.” His first, and much tougher, intention had been to demonstrate that humanitarianism alone could never solve society’s problems. He wanted Thymiane to show her contempt for her husband’s liberal platitudes by setting herself up as the madam of a whorehouse. The German distributors, however, refused to countenance such a radical denouement, and Pabst was forced to capitulate. The result is a flawed masterpiece, with a shining central performance that even the closing, compromised sequences cannot dim. Brooks has written that during the making of the film she spent all of her off-duty hours with rich revelers of whom Pabst disapproved. On the last day of shooting, “he decided to let me have it.” Her friends, he said, were preventing her from becoming a serious actress, and sooner or later they would discard her like an old toy. “Your life is exactly like Lulu’s, and you will end the same way,” he warned her. The passage of time convinced her that Pabst had a valid point. “Lulu’s story,” she told a journalist, “is as near as you’ll get to mine.”

from Louise Brook’s interview in Kevin Brownlow, The Parade’s Gone By...

You know what makes an actor great to work with?

Timing. You don’t have to feel anything. It’s like dancing with a perfect dancing partner. Osgood Perkins would give you a line so that you would react perfectly. It was timing—because emotion means nothing.

Look at Adolphe Menjou. He never felt anything. He used to say, “Now I do Lubitsch number one,” “Now I do Lubitsch number two.” And that’s exactly what he did. You felt nothing, working with him, and yet to see him on the screen—he was a great actor.

A director works fast who knows everything ahead of time. He sees the picture finished, whole, cut, titled. Pabst would take one shot, and—that was it. I remember I was going to do my famous Folies-girl walk across the stage in the theater scene of Pandora’s Box. I’d planned it all out. I took four steps on stage and Pabst said “Cut.” That was the end of it. I had given him all he wanted.

When I worked in night clubs, and in the theater, I knew all the real gangsters. Men like Capone. They were the most disgusting, idiotic boors. But, oddly enough, they had one great talent. During Prohibition, they owned a lot of nightclubs and they would hire people for these clubs that nobody else would have. A girl like Helen Morgan, for instance; nobody wanted her. She had a delicate little voice, she had very long legs, she had a large bosom, which wasn’t fashionable then; she wasn’t very animated, and she sat on the piano and wouldn’t use a microphone. The gangsters loved her. They
put her in a night club called The Backstage, and all of a sudden Zigfield "discovered" her.

Wallace Beery used to scheme all day to figure out ways to get my back to camera in two-shots. Billy Wellman said to me, "Don't let him do that to you." I said, "I don't give a damn what he does. You're the director. If you don't want him to back me up, you tell him." The result was that he'd have to take close-ups of me to get my face in the pictures. So I'd be in a close-up while Wally would be in a two-shot!

Looking through an old dictionary with the flyleaves pasted with quotes from Goethe, I came upon this one: "The novel [film] is a subjective epic composition in which the author begs leave to treat the world according to his point of view. It is only a question, therefore, whether he has a point of view. The rest will take care of itself."

A Big Swallow consists of only three shots: the approaching, protesting man; the photographer and his portrait camera as both are seen toppling into blackness; and third, the swallower backing off. According to Williamson, who responded to requests for an account of how he managed to achieve the effect, the middle scene was made some time after the shots of the advancing and retreating subject. The second scene, which had been shot last, was only put in its place when the negatives were prepared for making positive prints. Thus Williamson, by 1901, had discovered the principle of film editing, had created filmic time and had brought to the medium its earliest full-frame close-ups.

A decade later, David Wark Griffith believed that he had invented the close-up. And film editing and the moving camera and even restrained acting. Griffith staked out his claim to the "invention" of all these basic elements of cinematic art by taking out an ad in the New York Dramatic Mirror of December 3, 1913. And such is the power of the printed word, and so rarely have pre-1913, non-Griffith films figured in preserved study collections, that too many historians have believed Griffith's preposterous claim.

In considering the effectiveness of the silent film both in the past and in present-day reexamination, one can think of some great films deficient or even totally lacking in good cutting, in photographic quality, in lighting, in story construction; in short, lacking nearly every device known to cinema, save only one: the close-up.

Multiple exposures, dissolves, wipes, fades, crosscutting—all of these might never have come to the film, and without them but with the close-up alone, it is possible to think of the movies reaching the astonishing degree of emotional impact they did. For if the technological achievements of photography and the intermittent movements of cameras and projectors were able to give the illusion of life to the screen, it was the close-up that gave the medium its soul. A mysterious soul exemplified by the shimmering images of a Greta Garbo, Clara Bow, Asta Nielsen or Louise Brooks.

I will even go so far as to say that there has never been a great film without close-ups. In fact, a great film was never made until close-ups came into general use. All that the silent film contributed, apart from what it borrowed from the theatre (settings, movement and arrangement of the players), from the graphic arts (composition, spatial concepts, lighting) and from music (rhythmic cutting), is embodied in the close-up.

In the close-up the motion picture is in its own world. Only in the close-up can the cinema practice the utterly concentration, employ the power of emphasis, the artistry of selection and the magic of revelation, strengths that are all unique to the medium.

It is in the close-up that the film player enters a realm of acting undreamed of in the whole tradition of theatre. The pitiless demands of the enormously magnified

image shattered the hopes of many of the theatre’s best people when they turned to film. In a large measure it was the overpowering intimacy of the close-up that turned film watchers into something approaching drug addicts as they flowed, ninety million of them every week, to the movies of North America during the greatest years of the silent drama.

Not that all other factors of filmic construction were unimportant, but they had less to do with the effectiveness of the silent film than did the close-up. Cutting, continuity and lighting all modified the motion picture but the close-up characterized it.

Carl Dreyer, the famous Danish director, was fully aware of this unique power. He wrote: “Nothing in the world can be compared to the human face. It is a land one can never tire of exploring. There is no greater experience in a studio than to witness the expression of a sensitive face under the mysterious power of inspiration. To see it animated from inside and turning into poetry.”

Lines from and about Louise Brooks

Louise Brooks is the only woman who had the ability to transfigure whatever film into a masterpiece....Louise is the perfect apparition, the dream woman, the being without whom the cinema would be a poor thing. She is much more than a myth, she is a magical presence, a real phantom, the magnetism of the cinema.

—Ado Kyrou, French critic

Those who have seen her can never forget her. She is the modern actress par excellence....As soon as she takes the screen, fiction disappears along with art, and one has the impression of being present at a documentary. The camera seems to have caught her by surprise, without her knowledge. She is the intelligence of the cinematographic process, the perfect incarnation of that which is photogenic, she embodies all that the cinema rediscovered in its last years of silence: complete naturalness and complete simplicity. Her art is so pure that it becomes invisible. . . .I do not know of a greater tragedienne of the screen. . . . There is no Garbo! There is no Dietrich! There is only Louise Brooks!

—Henri Langlois, director of the Cinémathèque Française

I wanted a new type. I hired Louise Brooks because she’s so very sure of herself, she’s very analytical, she’s very feminine—but she’s damn good and sure she’s going to do what she wants to do. I could use her today [1967]. She was way ahead of her time. And she’s a rebel. I like her, you know. I like rebels. I like people you can look at and remember who they are.

—Howard Hawks

I have a gift for enraging people.

—Louise Brooks

I never try to feel sexy. . . .The people who try hardest to be sexy only fool other fools. —Louise Brooks

Imagine Pabst choosing Louise Brooks for Lulu when he could have had me!

—Marlene Dietrich

I just didn’t fit into the Hollywood scheme at all. I was neither a fluffy heroine, nor a wicked vamp, nor a woman of the world. I just didn’t fit into any category. I just didn’t interest them because I couldn’t be typed. . . .

—Louise Brooks

In writing the history of a life, I believe absolutely that the reader cannot understand the character and deeds of the subject unless he is given an understanding of that person’s sexual loves and hates and conflicts. It is the only way the reader can make sense out of innumerable apparently senseless actions. . . .I too am unwilling to write the sexual truth that would make my life worth reading. I cannot unbuckle the Bible Belt. That is why I will never write my memoirs.

—Louise Brooks

If I ever bore you it’ll be with a knife. —Louise Brooks

How I have existed fills me with horror. For I failed in everything—spelling, arithmetic, riding, swimming, tennis, golf; dancing, singing, acting; wife, mistress, whore, friend. Even cooking. And I do not excuse myself with the usual escape of “not trying.” I tried with all my heart.

—Louise Brooks
COMING UP IN BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS 31

 Sept 8 Mayo, Petrified Forest, 82 min, 1936
 Sept 15 Montgomery, Lady in the Lake, 103 min, 1946
 Sept 22 Chabrol, Le Beau Serge, 99 min, 1958
 Sept 29 Tarkovsky, Ivan’s Childhood, 95 min, 1962
 Oct 6 Friedken, The French Connection, 104 min 1971
 Oct 13 Kasdan, Body Heat, 113 min, 1981
 Oct 20 Costa-Gavras, Missing, 122 min, 1982
 Oct 27 Joffé, The Mission, 125 min, 1986
 Nov 3 Nair, Mississippi Masala, 117 min, 1991
 Nov 10 Miyazaki, Princess Mononoke, 134 min 1997
 Nov 17 Suleiman, The Time That Remains, 105 min, 2009
 Nov 24 Gilliam, The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus, 122 min, 2009
 Dec 1 Tarr, The Turin Horse, 143 min 2011
 Dec 8 Powell and Pressburger, A Matter of Life and Death/Stairway to Heaven, 104 min. 1946

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