

Women in Film

These public domain films and TV shows feature women in strong, prominent roles as heroines and role models.



African American Women:

The Devil's Daughter

59 min. Nina Mae McKinney runs afoul of voodoo in Jamaica.

Dirty Gertie from Harlem

(1946) 65 min. Francine Everett, Don Wilson. A sexy, enticing dancer from Harlem makes things happen in a sleepy Caribbean island resort.

Sepia Cinderella (1947) with Billy Daniels and Sheila Guyse. A struggling band leader's rise to fame after overcoming many obstacles, including a bad-girl vs. good-girl situation.

The Duke Is Tops (aka Bronze Venus)

(1938) 63 min. Lena Horne plays a night club singer who gets a chance at Broadway.

The Beulah Show (1950-1953)

Five episodes of the first television series to feature black actors. Beulah is a Negro domestic in a white family who pulls the weekly family situations together with more common sense than all of the others. The role of Beulah was played by 3 distinguished black women: Ethel Waters, Hattie McDaniel and Louise Beavers.

Get Christie Love

(1974) Teresa Graves. A black & sassy undercover operative uses street smarts, revealing outfits and Kung-Fu to penetrate the thriving drug dealing culture in Los Angeles.

Lady Cocoa

(1975) 93 min. Foxy Lady Cocoa (Lola Falana) is out to take down her mobster boyfriend.

TNT Jackson

(1974) Color. A young karate expert searches for her brother's killer in Hong Kong. Starring Jeannie Bell.

Velvet Smooth

(1976) 93 min. Johnnie Hill. The female head of a detective agency is hired by a crime lord to figure out who's taking his action.

Miss Betty Boop!

[48 public domain Cartoons!](#)



Adventure Serials & Westerns

THE PERILS OF PAULINE 1933 Evalyn Knapp 12 Chapters.

A famous scientist and his beautiful daughter travel to Indochina to find an ivory disc that has the formula for a deadly gas engraved on it. An evil doctor and his gang are also looking for it.

ZORRO'S BLACK WHIP 1944 George J. Lewis 12 Chapters. A female Zorro starring Linda Stirling.

Devil on Horseback (Lili Damita, 1936)

Western starring a woman, Lili Damita, rather than a male hero.

Water Rustlers (Dorothy Page, 1939)

B-Western starring a woman, Dorothy Page. She is not just the heroine, she is the star above her male leading man.

The Torch (1951)

Paulette Godard is a fiery hispanic who opposes a rising rebel general who takes over her town.

Angel and the Badman (1947)

John Wayne western in which a Quaker girl played by Gail Russell makes him reform his badman ways.

Annie Oakley TV

(1954-1957) A fictionalized account of the life of legendary Wild West sharpshooter Annie Oakley. Set in the quiet western town of Diablo, Annie and her little brother Tagg made sure that outlaws who moseyed into town kept on going. Cast: Gail Davis, Brad Johnson, Jimmy Hawkins. 64 half-hour episodes.

Classic Television Series

Sheena, Queen of the Jungle

(1955) Jungle girl Sheena and a hunter guide Bob Rayburn fight to restore harmony in the jungle by opposing evil that invades their environment. 16 half-hour episodes.

Decoy

(1957) Beverly Garland plays an undercover police woman in this syndicated cop series that was filmed in New York City. 20 half-hour episodes.

I Married Joan

(1952-1955) The adventures of the scatterbrained wife of a respected city judge, starring Joan Davis and Jim Backus. 24 episodes.

My Little Margie

(1952-1955) "My Little Margie" is the story of vivacious Margie Albright (Gale Storm) and father (Charles Farrell), a widowed executive at the NYC firm of Honeywell & Todd. 36 shows.

Private Secretary

(1953-1957) Susie, played by Ann Sothern, is secretary to handsome talent agent Peter Sands (Don Porter) and keeps getting messed up in his private life. 16 shows.

Loretta Young Show

(1953-1961) Long-running, half-hour drama anthology series hosted by actress Loretta Young. In addition to hosting the series, she played the lead in various episodes. 30 shows.

Meet Corliss Archer

(1954) Pert blond teenager Corliss Archer (Ann Baker) must balance her life at school, her lovable but goofy boyfriend Dexter and her well-meaning but clueless parents. 36 episodes.

The Lucy Show (1962-1968) Lucille Ball slapstick classic with Gale Gordon, Vivian Vance and numerous Hollywood guest stars. 30 episodes are in the public domain.

Betty White TV Shows

Life With Elizabeth

(1952-1955) With Betty White, Del Moore and announcer Jack Narz. This domestic comedy did not have episode titles. Each show consisted of three separate episodes in the life of a married couple, with the emphasis placed on gentle comedy. 27 episodes.

Date With the Angels

(1957-1958) Domestic sitcom centered around young Los Angeles newlyweds Gus Angel (Bill Williams) and Vicki Angel (Betty White). Richard Deacon plays neighbor Roger Finley. 21 episodes.

Feature Films - Comedy, drama, mystery, crime, etc.

Heartbeat (1946) 102m. Pickpocket Ginger Rogers in Paris falls for Jean-Pierre Aumont.

His Girl Friday (1940) 92m. Editor Cary Grant vs. reporter Rosalind Russell out to capture big story!

Indiscreet (1931) Gloria Swanson jeopardizes the relationship with the man she loves when a no-account from her past shows up.

My Dear Secretary (1948) Writer Kirk Douglas hires Laraine Day to help out. 95 min.

My Man Godfrey (1936) Carole Lombard, Alice Brady, Gail Patrick Director: Gregory La Cava. 95 min.

Nothing Sacred (1937) Color, 77m. Carole Lombard battles Fredric March!

The Rage of Paris (1938) 78m. Douglas Fairbanks Jr. and Louis Hayward battle over Danielle Darrieux

The Stork Club (1945) 98m. Night club singer Betty Hutton befriends rich patron Barry Fitzgerald.

That Uncertain Feeling (1941) 84m. Ernst Lubitsch romp with married Merle Oberon getting mixed up with Melvyn Douglas and Burgess Meredith.

The Admiral Was a Lady (1950) 87m. Edmond O'Brien, Wanda Hendrix. Ex-WAVE encounters four fun-loving, work-hating men, all of whom want to marry her.

Three Broadway Girls (1932) 79m. Joan Blondell, Ina Claire, Madge Evans are money hungry women who have sugar daddies who keep them in the lap of luxury.

Her Favorite Patient (1945) 72m. Aka. "Bedside Manner." Beautiful doctor Ruth Hussey meets handsome patient John Carroll.

Made for Each Other (1939) 92m. James Stewart, Charles Coburn, Carole Lombard. Problems of a young couple with a baby.

Three Guys Named Mike (1951) 90m. Jane Wyman dates 3 men named Mike. With Van Johnson, Howard Keel.

Lovers and Liars (1980, Italy) Color, 96m. Goldie Hawn. It's about this world-weary, chain smoker, bag-eyed, married guy, who drives to his dad's house (the dad is dying) and takes Goldie along -- he finds her at his mistress's house.

So's Your Aunt Emma! (1942) 61m. A dizzy old spinster (Zasu Pitts) gets involved in the boxing racket and gangland murders and is falsely accused of being notorious murderer "Ma Parker."

The Animal Kingdom (1932) 85m. Leslie Howard, Myrna Loy and marital discord.

The Bigamist (1953) 80m. Joan Fontaine, Ida Lupino, Edmund O'Brien marriage triangle! Directed by Ida Lupino.

Carnival Story (1954) Color, 98m. High-diver Lyle Bettger takes young Anne Baxter on to teach her the ropes, but a romantic triangle develops.

Cause for Alarm (1951) 72m. Loretta Young. Invalid husband claims wife trying to kill him, then dies.

Guest in the House (1944) 121m. Anne Baxter, Ralph Bellamy in gripping melodrama about neurotic young woman in household of her betrothed

Rain (1932) 94m. Joan Crawford, Walter Huston. Prostitute finds redemption in Pago Pago.

Sin Takes a Holiday (1930) 81m. Married Constance Bennett falls in love with Basil Rathbone in Paris.

Smash-Up -- Story of a Woman (1947) 103m. Susan Hayward (Oscar nomination) is excellent as an insecure night club singer who weds a radio star, then sinks into alcoholism.

Tulsa (1949) Color, 90m. Cattle woman Susan Hayward enters the wildcat oil business to avenge the death of her father, but loses her values along the way.

Woman on the Run (1950) 77m. Ann Sheridan, Dennis O'Keefe. Eyewitness to murder pursued around San Francisco.

Woman to Woman (1929) 77m. Betty Compson. Officer weds French ballerina, then gets amnesia.

Algiers (1938) 99m. Hedy Lamarr and Charles Boyer have torrid romance in the Casbah.

Indiscretion of an American Wife (1953) 63m. American Jennifer Jones meets her Italian lover, Montgomery Clift, one last time in Rome's railway station. Directed by Vittorio De Sica.

The Last Time I Saw Paris (1954) Color, 115m. Elizabeth Taylor and Van Johnson play two struggling lovers in the reckless gaiety of post-World War-II Paris.

Love Affair (1939) 87m. Irene Dunne and Charles Boyer meet on shipboard. Plans to continue the romance meet tragedy.

Made for Each Other (1939) 93m. Jimmy Stewart and Carole Lombard are a young married couple struggling with jobs, illness and lack of money.

Mr. Imperium (1951) Color, 87m. Lana Turner, Enzo Pinza romance.

Of Human Bondage (1934) 83m. The darker side of obsessive love finds Leslie Howard inexplicably pursuing an affair with vulgar waitress Bette Davis.

Penny Serenade (1941) 120 min. Classic tearjerker directed by George Stevens. Cary Grant and Irene Dunne, meet, love, marry and then drift apart when their unborn baby dies.

A Star is Born (1937) Color, 111 min. Star-struck Janet Gaynor gets a break in Hollywood thanks to movie star Fredric March. They fall in love and marry, but her star rises as his falls.

Swing High, Swing Low (1937) 95m. Carole Lombard and Fred MacMurray fall in and out of love.

A Farewell to Arms (1932) 78m. Gary Cooper, Helen Hayes in Hemingway WW-I classic.

Jane Eyre (1970) Color, 110m. George C. Scott stars as the brooding Rochester in Bronte's classic English tale, with Susannah York as Jane Eyre.

The Little Princess (1939) Color, 91m. Shirley Temple is orphan when her father goes to war during Victorian era.

Rain (1932) 90m. Somerset Maugham's tawdry South Seas tale. Joan Crawford is trollop Sadie Thompson and the target of preacher Walter Huston's reform.

The Scarlet Letter (1934) 70m. Colleen Moore stars in Nathaniel Hawthorne classic.

City Without Men (1943) 75m. Linda Darnell, Edgar Buchanan. Stories of female residents in boarding house near prison.

Ma Barker's Killer Brood (1960) 89m. Lurene Tuttle, Tristram Coffin. Ma Barker and sons terrorize South with crime in 1930s.

Nancy Drew, Reporter (1939) 68m. Bonita Granville plays the famous teenage sleuth.

Swamp Women (1956) Color, 67m. Marie Windsor, Beverly Garland. 3 female prisoners seek diamonds hidden in swamp.

Big Town After Dark (1947) 69m. Crime reporter Hillary Brooke opposes local crime boss.

Blonde Ice (1948) 73m. Leslie Brooks marries wealthy men who die mysteriously.

The Hitch-Hiker (1953) 71m. Edmond O'Brien and Frank Lovejoy out for a hunting trip are taken over by a murderous fugitive. No women in cast, but directed by Ida Lupino.

Lady Gangster (1942) 62m. Faye Emerson, Julie Bishop, Jackie Gleason. The title tells it all.

Lady in the Death House (1944) 55m. Story of woman on death row told by letter she wrote on day of her scheduled execution.

The Naked Kiss (1964) 92m. Constance Towers is a prostitute trying to start new in a small town. Directed by Sam Fuller.

Please Murder Me (1956) 78m. Angela Lansbury, Raymond Burr in homicide yarn.

Strange Love of Martha Ivers (1946) 117m. Gripping melodrama with Barbara Stanwyck bound to her husband by a crime she committed long ago. Kirk Douglas' film debut!

Lady of Burlesque (1943) 91m. Stripper Barbara Stanwyck traps killer in burlesque house.

The Lady Confesses (1949) 70m. Fiancee investigates mysterious death of her intended's first wife.

A Shriek in the Night (1933) 66m. Ginger Rogers and Lyle Talbot and murder.

The Thirteenth Guest (1932) 69m. Ginger Rogers, Lyle Talbot involved in murder mystery.

Esther and the King (1960, color, Italy) 109 min. Joan Collins stars in the biblical story about Esther, who must risk her life to save her people from the charmingly wicked prince Haman.

Christmas Without Snow 1980 100m. Color. Michael Learned, John Houseman. Divorced woman tries to build new life with child in new city.

Divorce His 1973 90m. Color. Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton. Breakup of a marriage told from perspectives of both the husband and wife.

Divorce Hers 1973 90m. Color. Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton. Part 2 from Liz' viewpoint.

Driver's Seat (1971) 102m. Color. Elizabeth Taylor. Italy. Mental spinster searches Rome for someone to kill her.

Eliza's Horoscope 1975 Canada 120m. Color. Elizabeth Moorman, Tommy Lee Jones. Young woman arrives in Montreal looking for love.

Katherine 1975 97m. Color. Sissy Spacek, Art Carney, Jane Wyatt, Henry Winkler. Woman gets involved in fights of the 1960s-70s. TV movie.

New Adventures of Heidi 1978 98m. Color. Katy Kurtzman, Burl Ives, John Gavin. Heidi leaves Switzerland for trip to New York City.

Portrait of a Show Girl 1982 94m Color. Leslie Ann Warren, Rita Moreno. Story of three Las Vegas showgirls.

The Dance of Life (1929) 112m. Hal Skelly, Nancy Carroll. A vaudeville comic and a pretty young dancer aren't having much luck in their separate careers, so they decide to combine their acts. In order to save money on the road, they get married.

Kept Husbands (1931) 76m. Drama. Clara Kimball Young, Joel McCrea, Dorothy Mackail. Daughter of a wealthy family decides to marry a poor working man.

Millie (1931) 85m. Drama. Helen Twelvetrees. Millie's life begins to crumble when she finds out her husband is having an affair.



Sin of Nora Moran (1933) 64m. Crime/Drama. Zita Johann, John Miljan. Nora Moran, a young woman with a difficult and tragic past, is sentenced to die for a murder that she did not commit.

Chained for Life (1952) 70m. Drama/Exploitation. Real life Siamese twins Violet and Daisy Hilton (from "Freaks"). A Siamese twin kills the husband who left her.

A Song for Miss Julie (1945) 61m. Musical/Romance. Shirley Ross. A Broadway writing team visits the granddaughter and great-great-granddaughters of a songwriter for his life story. An old diary holds interesting stories....

Cheers for Miss Bishop (1941) 95m. Drama. Dedicated teacher Martha Scott is devastated when her fiancé runs off with her cousin. When the cousin dies in childbirth the teacher raises the daughter.

Should a Girl Marry (1939) 61m. Drama. Anne Nagel. A young woman and her doctor husband are victims of a blackmail scheme when it is discovered that she was born in prison.

His Double Life (1933) 67m. Famous artist Roland Young changes identities when his valet dies, meets and marries Lillian Gish.

Lonely Wives (1931) 87m. Comedy. Edward Everett Horton, Esther Ralston and Laura La Plante in comedy of mistaken identity.

The Royal Bed, The (1931) 73m. Lowell Sherman, Mary Astor. Troubles with the Royals in mythical kingdom.