

She Doesn't Use a Lipstick in Public

By Ivan St. Johns

IT was at the Montmartre where so many things begin—and end—in Hollywood.

Somebody said, "I want to introduce you to Joan Crawford." And I said, "Oh, no—I don't want to meet her."

But having been well brought up and seeing a horrified look upon my friend's countenance, I realized that a gentleman doesn't refuse an introduction to a lady without an adequate explanation, so I said, "Oh, yes—Joan Crawford. Sure—I'd love to meet her."

But she was dancing and my friend wandered away and forgot and I was glad.

Because I didn't want to meet her.

I had a perfectly good reason.

I have always liked not knowing Joan Crawford.

She is so mysterious.

Her eyes are long and strangely alight. You look at her one moment and she is a slim, dancing girl, a prom girl, a sub-deb. And then she dances around the floor and comes back as sombre and passionate and deep as an Egyptian poem.

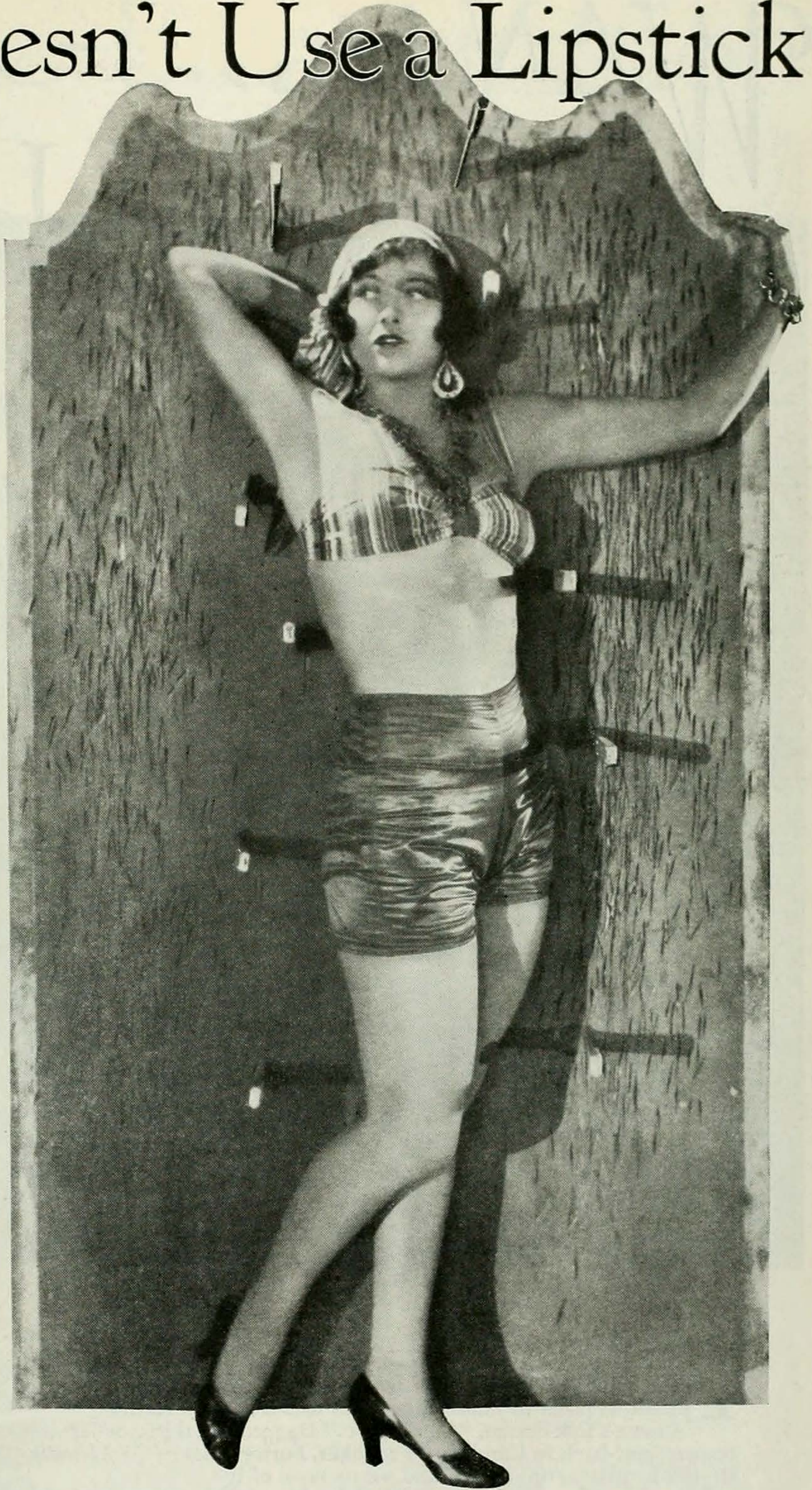
SHE possesses the greatest of all charms—mystery. The cloud of her dark hair, the light of her eyes that are sometimes violet and sometimes blue and sometimes gray-green, the flexibility of her long, red mouth, are all mystery.

When I was younger, I would have dashed to be introduced to such a girl. I would have rushed all over the place looking for someone, anyone, who could introduce me to her. I would have pursued an introduction over a period of weeks if necessary.

But now—well, in the thirties, one cherishes mystery, one cherishes illusion. And, whisper it, for it is not very chivalrous, one has been disappointed too often.

But I did eventually meet Joan Crawford. Hollywood is such a little place. You meet everybody eventually. Here or

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Joan Crawford dances more and better than any girl in Hollywood. Even when she sits perfectly still, you feel that she is longing to dance, that she is humming dance music softly under her breath . . . Man asks so little of woman nowadays. Just to be intrigued by her mystery . . . That is the secret of Joan Crawford's appeal—she is a mystery



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there—at the Mayfair, or on the lot, or on Hollywood Boulevard.

I met Joan. And found out that she was born in San Antonio, Texas, and that she was playing at the Hippodrome in New York when Harry Rapf saw her and brought her out to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and that she played extras for a long time and finally fought her way up to a place as one of the most popular leading ladies on the M.-G.-M. lot.

AND as each of these facts sank into my consciousness I decided that facts are brutal things and should never be permitted or told.

But somehow, strangely enough, Joan Crawford survived meeting, she survived even facts. She was still mysterious. She is still. I am grateful for that.

Joan is one of those people whose eyes look sad when they smile, whose eyes are deep and shining, almost with tears, when they laugh. When she is dancing, and she is almost always dancing—for she dances more and better than any other girl in Hollywood,—when she is dancing you feel that she is thinking about fields of daisies in the spring sunshine, or about Keats' poetry, or about the Shanghai riots. But when she sits perfectly still and listens—she listens well, which is a characteris-

tic any woman could afford to cultivate—you feel that she is thinking about dancing, longing to dance, humming dance music softly under her breath.

Maybe all this promise is a mirage, but at least Joan Crawford is one of the few modern girls I have met who doesn't destroy it. She allows you to keep it.

She doesn't use a lipstick in public. Her voice is soft and low—pure Texan, but very sweet.

MAN asks so little of woman nowadays. Just to be allowed to find her still womanly, just to be allowed still to adore her, still be intrigued by her mystery.

If Joan Crawford is the success on the screen that M.-G.-M. insists she is going to be, it will be because she is femininity before the nineteenth amendment. Not that she is old-fashioned. No indeed. But she is more like the days of sedan chairs and trailing skirts, or masks and rosebuds and scented notes instead of telephones. Which is very odd, because she is so modern and does the Charleston so well, and wears the shortest skirts you ever beheld in your life.

But that is the secret of Joan Crawford's appeal—she is a contradiction; she is a mystery. Long may she remain unsolved.

Brickbats and Bouquets

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Oooh! Colman Fans!

Fort Wayne, Ind.

Has anyone ever caught Ronald Colman expressing love, via the face?

Because I would like to know how he looks. I admire Mr. Colman for his looks and acting ability, but in love scenes he is blah.

In one scene in "The Dark Angel" he is saying goodbye to Vilma Banky. There was Vilma, her beautiful face radiant with the light of love. And there stood Ronald about as affectionate as an Arctic fish.

After a couple of years he stepped forward (I doubt not that he was pushed) and took Miss Banky in his arms and then . . . horrors . . . he had the unromanticness (the only word) to cough!

No other actress on the screen so completely changes her personality with each succeeding picture as Vilma Banky. It is hard to believe that the frail *Kitty Vane* of "The Dark Angel" is also the red-blooded, self-reliant *Barbara Worth* of that story.

Upon seeing an emotional performance by Eleonora Duse, Sarah Bernhardt said, "That woman is not acting, she is suffering." And that may be said of Vilma Banky. She does not act, she lives. A real actress and the sweetest personality on our screen today.

BEE PIERCE.

Who's Our Greatest Actress?

West Palm Beach, Fla.

"Male or female?" we ask the movie spotlight of today and instantly the answer is flashed back—"Male."

It seems unfortunate that there should be such a dearth of feminine sparklers at a time when the movie firmament is gleaming with an array of masculine luminaries. The men we have—consummate actors of force and fascinating personality—but how seldom do we find opposite them women of equal attraction and capabilities!

Almost every week or so we hear about a new actress of either domestic or foreign origin who is purported to be unsurpassed in every way. Hopefully expectant we arrive at the theater only to see Barrymore, Gilbert, Colman, Moreno, or Menjou carry off the honors.

However, there is an actress whom I believe is deserving of this high position. Her portrayals radiate unusual sincerity and enthusiasm, combined with emotional depth and versatility—an actress of extraordinary "appeal," rare beauty, and personality plus—Marguerite de la Motte.

L. B. STOKESBERRY.

Making Up the Nation's Mind

San Antonio, Texas.

I am not a reformer, a reconstructionist or a radical. And I am certainly against the narrow-minded ways of the present Board of Censors. However, it is perfectly obvious to me that the motion-picture creators, if given free rein, can do whatever they will to lead the thought of this nation.

The movies are overwhelming in their importance to the actions, moral and immoral, of the masses. They do not have to copy life. They may anticipate it and mould it to their purpose. The words of Oscar Wilde are recalled: "The imagination is essentially creative, and always seeks for a new form. The boy-burglar is simply the inevitable result of life's imitative instincts. He is Fact, occupied as Fact usually is, with trying to reproduce Fiction . . ."

Do the ones who actually create pictures (I haven't the vaguest idea who they are) feel this responsibility? There would be no responsibility if the movies were Art. Since they are not Art (for all Art is quite useless) they will be held accountable by posterity.

This same reasoning cannot be applied to drama since the world of the theater is practically limited to New York City. C. H. F.

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