

F O R Y O U R C O N S I D E R A T I O N 2 0 1 1

The
ARTIST

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

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THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY

THE ARTIST

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Silent film, illustrated musically, with some title cards to indicate the dialogues, with actors whose lips move when they speak although we never hear their voices. The images are in black and white, in format 1.33.

1 **TITLES** 1

The letters of the titles come up on a title card typical of the 1920s. Elegant motifs around the edge of the frame, and, in the background, there are geometrical shapes reminiscent of the light beams of a film première. Behind is a stylized town. The titles end in a fade to black. On black, the date appears on the screen: 1927

2 **INT. LABORATORY - DAY** 2

In a "futuristic" 1920s laboratory, a man in tail coat and bow tie is being tortured. Ultrasound is being piped into his ears. It's incredibly painful! He's screaming.

Title card:
I'm not telling! I won't talk!!!

His torturers, cold men of science in white coats, gradually increase the volume. The pain seems unbearable, the volume reaches level 10 (maximum), the man passes out!

3 **INT. CELLS & CORRIDORS - DAY** 3

Guards wearing long leather overcoats throw the man into a cell!

As the man is lying there on the ground, a dog wiggles through the bars at the window. The dog, a Jack Russell, jumps on top of the man - visibly his master - and begins to lick his face. The man opens one eye! When he sees his dog, he can't help cracking a smile...

The man, now on his feet, looks in pain. Despite the pain, he motions to his dog who begins to bark in lively fashion.

Outside the cell, the guard looks curious about the noise. He goes to the door, opens the spy flap and finds himself face to face with the man, eye to eye just a couple of inches apart! The man moves his eyes in such a way that he hypnotizes the guard! Superimposed on the screen: a spinning black and white spiral, until the dazed guard take his keys, opens the door and releases the man and his dog.

The man (the hero, thus) imprisons the guard without harming him, then runs over to the guard's desk. His ears are still causing him pain, but he opens a drawer and takes out his belongings: a top hat which he snaps open, and a mask, which he puts over his head to conceal his eyes.

We catch up with the masked man walking down corridors. He suddenly stops, copied by his dog who follows him like his shadow. The man, on his guard, has spotted another guard where two corridors meet.

With a look, he orders his dog to move forwards into the guard's line of sight. The guard looks over at the animal. Using his fingers, the hero pretends to shoot his dog. The dog collapses, plays dead. The guard, increasingly curious, gets to his feet. He slowly approaches the motionless dog. When he comes close he is attacked from the side by the hero, who quickly puts him out of action with a mere punch!

The masked man then rushes to another cell, and releases a young female prisoner. She too is wearing evening dress. As she is thanking him he staggers and clutches his ears in pain. She's concerned.

Title card:
Can I help you in some way?

He refuses.

Title card:
No. I don't get helped. I give the help around here.

He composes himself. She casts him an admiring glance. Then, in view of the urgency of their situation, they escape at a run.

4 **EXT. HOUSE/LABORATORY - DAY**

4

They come out of a house that is lost in the hills, climb into a Bugatti sports car that the man starts by rubbing two wires together, and speed off.

5 **EXT. ROAD - DAY**

5

The car speeds along the road. Its occupants turn round to check they aren't being followed.

6 **INT. HOUSE/LAB - DAY**

6

The guard who got knocked out picks himself up, realizes what's happened and dashes over to his office. He grabs a radio emitter and begins sending a message.

7 **EXT. AIR FIELD - DAY**

7

The hero, the young woman and the dog come to a halt in the Bugatti on the air field, by a telegraph pole whose wires lead...to a watch tower.

In the watch tower, a radio receptor is vibrating. A soldier approaches, listens and suddenly understands! He grabs hold of his gun and goes out onto the air field, only to find the fugitives! He tries to shoot at them as he draws closer, but the hero manages to throw an airplane propeller at him, before climbing inside where the woman and dog are waiting for him.

The airplane begins to move.

The soldier shoots.

The airplane is positioning itself on the runway, while the soldier continues to fire!

The aircraft gains speed.

The soldier is still shooting, but too late, as the hero pulls back the joystick, and the airplane takes to the sky...

The soldier is furious, but the hero is all smiles as he looks back towards the ground and shouts something.

Title card: Free Georgia forever!!!

The airplane flies away into the evening sky.

8 **EXT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT**

8

A little later in the night, still at the controls, the man is fighting not to fall asleep. Behind him, the woman is sleeping, the dog is lying in her arms. Suddenly she is awoken by explosions happening close by! Pandemonium! The man doesn't understand it either, he tries to pick up altitude, but quickly notices that the explosions are in fact pretty and inoffensive. He consults a calendar dial on the control panel that shows it is July 14th, immediately understands, and bursts into laughter.

Title card: We've arrived, welcome to France!!!

As the music picks up the tune of The Marseillaise, the airplane flies away through the exploding fireworks...

The words "The End" appear on the screen.

9

INT. WINGS MOVIE THEATER LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

9

From the moment they parked the car onwards, we become absorbed by what's happening around the screening of end of this film.

Behind the screen, we've seen the actor who plays the hero - his name is George Valentin - closely studying the reactions of the audience. He was standing close to his dog, motioning to it not to make a noise. The dog's name is Jack.

In the same area, we've also seen the lead actress. Her name is Constance Gray. She too looks tense and is latched onto the arm of a pleasant-looking man who is chewing anxiously on a cigar. The man looks rich, but a little weak. He's surely the producer.

10

INT. MOVIE THEATER LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

10

In the house, much of the audience is open-mouthed, excited, immobile and often wide-eyed.

In the pit, a symphony orchestra plays to accompany the film.

(9) Now that the film is ending, and the last note is sounding, the cast anxiously awaits the audience's verdict, which, after two or three seconds of silence, bursts into thunderous applause, to the great joy of the actor and the people around him, especially the actress and the producer, who kiss each other on the lips.

Two theater hands bring down the curtain.

(10) The lights come on. George Valentin comes onto the stage and acknowledges the audience, they are cheering for him. He is so happy he dances a few tap steps to express his joy then he acknowledges the orchestra before finally motioning to someone in the wings to join him. Jack the dog trots over in response. The crowd laughs and cheers, George waves to the dog, Jack waves back then waves at the audience, the people are loving it!

In the wings, Constance is fuming with rage, but on stage, George is pretending with his fingers to pull at the dog, who fakes death. Thunderous applause again.

Behind the actress, the producer can't hold back a smile, and this enrages the actress still more.

Suddenly, George, hamming it up, remembers something he'd forgotten, and asks someone from the other side of the wings to join him. It's Constance. She comes over, smiling to the audience, and says something to George with a smile.

Title card: I'll get you for that.

She waves, but we can tell that her smile is set between her teeth. She isn't feeling comfortable. George motions firing a gun with his fingers, but she does not fall down, merely casts him a "very funny" glance. George looks at his fingers, not understanding why they don't work anymore then mimes throwing them away behind him, as though they've become useless. Constance stalks back off into the wings in annoyance, but the audience is ecstatic. Once in the wings, the actress sticks up her middle finger at George, and exaggeratedly mouths so he can read her lips: "Put this up your ass." George, grinning broadly, responds by clapping his hands in applause, then leaves the stage, executing a few more dance steps as he does so. The audience is delighted.

As he comes off stage, George gets soundly told off by Constance, but, still grinning, he motions towards the audience who are still asking for more. The producer, although delighted by the successful reception, makes a weak attempt to calm the actress down. As for George, he returns to the stage, the audience roars. He pretends to want to leave the stage, and mimes bumping into an invisible wall just as he's leaving the stage. George holds his nose, the audience goes wild, Constance gets even madder, and while George carries on clowning about, the producer too breaks into a beaming smile. He's probably realized that George has the audience on his side... Constance, furious, storms off. She is followed by the producer who is trying to placate her, although it looks like he's got his work cut out for him.

11

EXT. MOVIE THEATER LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

11

Outside, we are in front of a typically American movie theater decked out with all the accessories of a grand première. The entrance is lit up, there are crowds gathered on the sidewalk, cops are guarding the red carpet with a cordon of bodies, etc.

George comes out, causing the crowds, mainly young women, to press forwards - and the photographers' flashes to spark into life. The cops are struggling to maintain control of the situation as George poses for the photographers and waves at his many fans.

In the crowd, a young woman right at the front is staring at him in rapture. She drops her bag and, as she bends to pick it up, a swell in the crowd pushes her underneath the arms of the policeman in front of her, out of the crowd and into George. She stares at him, more in love than ever, delighted to be there. The police wait for someone to give orders. George doesn't quite know what to do. Nobody moves. The young woman finally bursts out laughing, which, after a moment of shock, causes George to laugh too, thus placating the cops and tacitly signaling to the photographers that they can take pictures of the scene. The flashes seem to lend the woman self-confidence who, in a very carefree manner, begins to clown about in front of them. George is delighted at the sight, by the whole scene and, realizing this, the young woman steals a kiss. Flash. The image becomes static, then dissolves into the printed picture on the front page of "The Hollywood Reporter" newspaper, along with three other pictures of the scene and the headline **WHO'S THAT GIRL?**

12

INT. GEORGE & DORIS' HOUSE - DAY

12

The very same newspaper is being read by an elegant woman sitting at a sumptuous breakfast table. We are in the large dining room of an ultra-luxurious Hollywood villa. All around her are magnificent furniture, superb paintings and objets d'art, including a beautiful trio of monkeys, one hiding its eyes, one with hands clasped to its ears and the third obscuring its mouth. George comes into the room and kisses his wife. She responds with cold indifference. You could cut the atmosphere with a knife. The woman hands George the newspaper. He knows what's up but tries to laugh it off. She doesn't find it funny, is as cold as stone and barely looks at him. She is obviously extremely annoyed with him. George picks up his dog and puts it on the table. Jack drops his head to one side and his big eyes implore seem to implore her forgiveness. It's the exact expression of someone asking to be loved, but Doris is implacable. She gets up, walks away and does not turn back. Left on his own, George has a closed expression on his face. He seems unhappy to have hurt his wife's feelings. Then he realizes that Jack is on the table in a ridiculous pose, and signals to him to get down. The dog obeys. George looks at the paper, the cause of his problems.

13

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET BUS - DAY

13

Thirteen white letters placed on a hillside.

HOLLYWOODLAND.

Below, in town, a bus.