

Loos, Anita (1893-1981) Encyclopedia Article

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Although known primarily as a screenwriter who authored more than 150 screenplays over three decades—beginning in 1912 and ending with her retreat from Hollywood in 1953—Anita Loos is perhaps best known as the writer of the acclaimed 1925 novel *Gentleman Prefer Blondes*, which she adapted for both Broadway and motion pictures. Conceiving the idea as a little piece centering on the adventures of "gold-digger" Lorelei Lee, a caricature of writer H.L. Mencken's fixation with "a stupid little blonde," the sketch evolved from a serial for *Harpers Bazaar* to a novel that was ultimately translated into 14 different languages. It was produced for the screen in 1928, remade in 1953, and eventually became a "break-through" vehicle for Marilyn Monroe. As a screenwriter, Loos is generally credited with being one of the creators of what has become recognized as the "Golden Age" of Hollywood, writing scenarios for D.W. Griffith and helping to launch the career of Douglas Fairbanks. Her strength as a writer lay in clever lines and dialogue rather than on story and character development.

Further Reading:

Loos, Anita. *A Girl Like I*. New York, Viking, 1966.

———. *Cast of Thousands*. New York, Grosset & Dunlap, 1977.

———. *Kiss Hollywood Goodbye*. New York, Viking, 1974.

Yeck, Joanne. "Anita Loos." *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 26: American Screenwriters*. Detroit, Gale Research Company, 1984, 213-18.