



REELS & RIVALS: Sisters in Silent Films

Jennifer Ann Redmond

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Female silent film stars possessed beauty, persistence, flair, and probably a sister in the business. You may have seen Mae Marsh in *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), Constance Talmadge in *Intolerance* (1916), or Lillian Gish in *Broken Blossoms* (1919), but their sisters also starred in major motion pictures, such as Marguerite Marsh in *The Master Mystery* (1919), Norma Talmadge in *The Battle Cry of Peace* (1915), and Dorothy Gish in *Orphans of the Storm* (1921). These six appeared in countless movies. Most of their films are lost, but their legends remain. Few knew at the time that these extraordinary women were more than just faces on a screen; they were complex and human, with sometimes strange parents, body image issues, and relationship struggles. Their mistakes and triumphs often mirrored our own, though they were miles away in Hollywood. Their stories of violent marriages, heartbreaking tragedies, drastic surgeries, and secret identities are finally revealed in a candid exposé of the truth behind the tinsel. Sister stars in *Reels and Rivals* that are profiled include: Norma and Constance Talmadge; Lillian and Dorothy Gish; Edna Flugrath and sisters Shirley Mason and Viola Dana; Helene and Dolores Costello; Poly Ann and Loretta Young with sister Sally Blane; Constance and Faire Binney; Priscilla and Marjorie Bonner; Grace and Mina Cunard; Alice and Marceline Day; Marion and Madeline Fairbanks; Laura and Violet La Plante; Mae and Marguerite Marsh; Ella, Ida Mae, and Fay McKenzie; Beatriz and Vera Michelena; Mary and Florence Nash; Sally O'Neil and sister Molly O'Day; Mabel and Edith Taliaferro; Olive and Alma Tell; and famous Vaudevillians *The Duncan Sisters* and *The Dolly Sisters*. Illustrated with 94 studio portraits, film stills, and candid photos that capture the glamour and excitement of Hollywood's Golden Era. Indexed. About the author: Jennifer Ann Redmond's work has been featured in *Classic Images*, *Vintage Life*, and *ZELDA* magazine. She resides in her childhood home on Long Island, New York.

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