

When Women Rule

UK : 1908 : dir. Lewin Fitzhamon : Hepworth
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

Silent : 10 min

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 Dolly Lupone; Gertie Potter

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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The British Film Catalogue 1895-1985 listing:

"Comedy. Suffragettes make men don skirts and take over a fire station."

[no listing in "Classics of the Silent Screen", "A Pictorial History of the Silent Screen", "Silent Movies: A Picture Quiz Book", "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. A fair number of films pre-1910 were in the Dire Warning category about the *monstrous regiment of women*. Almost a full century later, and we see that the displacement men feared has indeed come about, but in ways far subtler and indirect than they could ever have anticipated. Western civilisation is unquestionably becoming matriarchalist by perceptible increments. The irony is that the traditionally understood centres of political power still remain largely in male hands, so that even while society is being refashioned wholesale to the dictates of female sensibilities, women may continue to allow themselves the luxury of protesting their exclusion and underprivilege. Women do "rule" now, but men remain in government. No-one in the suffragette or feminist movements could ever have devised such a cunning sleight-of-hand, but social trends have coalesced to bring it into being.

This title clearly has no relevance to the archive, beyond the presence of Gertie Potter, Britain's first named girl actress, now cast in her first mature role. Her age is not known, but the same year she was playing a schoolboy (with brother Bertie) in "**THE SCHOOLBOYS' REVOLT**", and in "**A DOLL'S REVENGE**" the previous year she had been a child whose doll is broken by her brother (Bertie again) – the doll reforms, assumes giant size, and eats him. Symbolism intended? Doubtful, but deconstructionists have never worried too much about actual intent – the symbolism is there to be read, all the same.

See subject index under [SILENT CINEMA](#).