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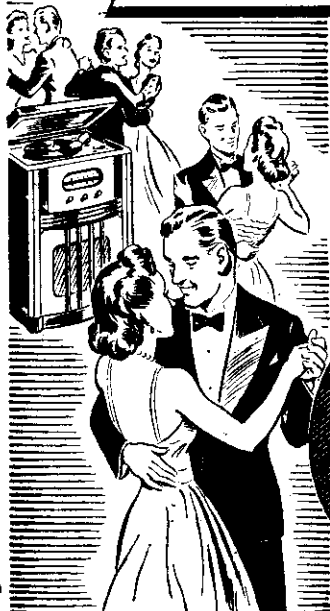


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Film Reviews by G.M.

## SPEAKING CANDIDLY

WHAT A WOMAN!

(Columbia)



HERE is Hollywood in its most sophisticated dress, behaving like a clever conversationalist at a smart cocktail-party; being elegant, witty, mildly daring—and superficial. But entertaining, too, so long as the cocktail mood lasts. So "advanced" is this brittle comedy (by Hollywood standards), that it even dares to permit the girl to be won, not by the rugged, simple soul who adores her, but by the slick, know-all journalist, who at no time gives any clear sign of being fond of anybody but himself.

With the froth and bubble skimmed off, *What a Woman!* reduces to the familiar recipe of the Big Business Woman who is so successful that she thinks she can manage without Love, and it gives Rosalind Russell the type of role that fits her as snugly as the frocks she wears. She portrays a super-commission agent and talent scout, a woman whose flair for discovering best-selling authors and box-office stars enables her to maintain a retinue of assistants, an elegant suite of apartments and a wardrobe that will cause many eyes to goggle among the feminine section of the audience. But her flair is not working very well when the story opens; having launched a novel entitled "The Whirlwind," which has sold 10 million copies, she is at her wits' end to find a suitable demi-god to play the hero's part in the Hollywood version. Simultaneously, Brian Aherne, as a journalist who keeps his hat on in the house and the presence of women just to indicate what a good journalist he is, has been assigned to the job of writing Miss Rosalind's "profile" in four instalments, for his magazine, and is employing his favourite journalistic technique of "practically living with his subject" in order to secure the full story. Together they discover that the anonymous author of the novel, a quiet young professor of English (Willard Parker), exactly measures up to the physical specifications of the character he has created. Having cajoled him into undertaking the part on the screen, Miss Russell is convinced that the rest will be easy. But it isn't so easy; the professor may look the part but he certainly can't act it until Miss Russell, employing all her charm, thaws him out for the torrid love scenes.

And then she finds that she really has unchained a Whirlwind. Before she can catch her breath she has been swept unwillingly almost up to the altar, while the journalist looks cynically on and tells her she brought it on herself by trifling with the professor's affections for the sake of her ten per cent commission. In the outcome, however, she manages to slip out of the vortex and into the arms of the journalist while the Whirlwind rushes on towards screen stardom.

Hollywood does not make many great films, and this is certainly not one of them. But Hollywood does undoubtedly make this kind of film supremely well, if this is the kind of film you like.

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