

Edgar's Sunday Courtship

US : 1920 : dir. : Goldwyn Silent : ? min
 prod: : scr: Booth Tarkington : dir.ph.:
Johnny Jones; Lucille Rickson; Buddy Messinger
 Adult cast unknown

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ € Z ♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Look how the mighty are fallen – another primal boy goes weak at the knees over a canoodling vamp.
 Source: The Silents Majority website



Buddy Messinger dons his best mortgage-forecloser face – no doubt spurned in love by Southern belle Rickson
Source: The Silents Majority website

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Jones:

"Charles Edward Peil, a vigorous, keep-fit boy with rather bulging blue-grey eyes, was the son of actors. His father, Edward J Peil (1888-1958), was a beefy and often menacing stalwart of thrillers and Westerns – he played, for instance, "Evil Eye" in D.W. Griffith's "BROKEN BLOSSOMS" – while his mother, Etta Raynor, was a more graceful performer.

Though young Charlie had graced the board at six months, and been in films with Constance Talmadge (several times) and Mary Pickford (once), besides non-starring roles with the Franklin Kiddies, his identity was kept a strict secret – presumably in the interests of "real, typical American boy-next door quality" – when he was chosen to play **Edgar**, hero of some stories written specially for Goldwyn by Booth Tarkington of "Penrod" fame. (Author, also, incidentally, in 1918, of "The Magnificent Ambersons".)

Edgar is very much a rehash of **Penrod** – the good bad boy with an over-lively imagination – and Charles Peil became plain Johnny Jones for

the duration of these twelve two-reelers and some time after. (Confusingly, Edgar's kid brother Charlie was played by Charlie's kid sister Virginia.)

Changing his screen name to Edward Peil Jr, Charles/Johnny remained in movies till the 1930s."

[no listing in "Classics of the Silent Screen", "Hollywood in the Twenties", "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. This instalment in the **Edgar** series seems to drive home the Tom Sawyer / Becky Thatcher parallels all too obviously. I've often griped elsewhere in this archive about the incessant and gratuitous heterosexualising of younger and younger kids by modern film and television writers, as though childhood were nothing more than a blind groping towards that first date, that first kiss, and a nine-year old who does not already have a boy or girlfriend is somehow falling behind the field. Yet here in 1920 we see something of the same strand in the adult's view of the childhood world. If there was a significant difference (and I clearly have not seen this title, so one must be careful) it would be that, in the 1920s, these early flowerings of courtship would have been seen as children "acting out" relationships which they couldn't even dimly comprehend so young, whereas today sexual awareness is ubiquitous, and the same "acting out" has become required cultural behaviour – to the extent that we have seven-year old anorexic girls and fashion-conscious five-year old boys, where end-of-term school parties have become "junior proms" at which to establish one's place in the sexual pecking order. In other words, what would have amused 1920s (adult) audiences as essentially counter-intuitive behaviour in boys of 13 or 14 is now viewed, and more importantly, transmitted, as the social norm. The question then, of course, is whether children themselves have altered significantly in that short space of time, or the culture has simply changed the script they are required to perform.

See "**EDGAR AND THE TEACHER'S PET**" for other biographical notes, comments on the series and a list of the full twelve titles. Jones and Messinger were 12, Lucille Rickson 13.

See subject index under **BOY MEETS GIRL, COMEDY, SILENT CINEMA, SILENT SERIES** and **BOOTH TARKINGTON**.