

SUBJECT INDEX:

NANNIES, GOVERNESSES, PRIVATE TUTORS & DOMESTIC SERVANTS

See also: [WORKING BOYS / WORKING GIRLS](#) for young servants

As usual, this list will not itemise every single film where a housemaid flits across the screen, but only those titles where a butler, maidservant or nanny play a significant role in the proceedings. Governesses, like stepmothers, have traditionally been the ogresses of children's fiction, nannies less so, although the Julie Andrews model of both professions (in **"THE SOUND OF MUSIC"** and **"MARY POPPINS"**) owed more to wishful thinking than recorded experience. Both have been traditional female occupations, although the governess is no more than a faint echo of the pedagogue in classical Greece, a servant employed to chaperone the son of the house and keep him on the (pardon the pun) straight and narrow. Conventional wisdom today has it – falsely, of course – that the severe childhoods of Victorian and Edwardian society can be attributed to a culture of male dominance in the home and teaching professions, yet in both eras children of the gentry and aristocracy, boys as much as girls, spent the formative early part of their lives under the thumb of a nanny or governess, who were put in sole charge of their daily needs until the age was reached when they could be packed off to boarding school. The prevailing fetish among Victorian men for being whipped by a dominatrix in establishments dedicated to that practise is testimony enough to the kind of treatment habitually meted out to them by women in their early childhoods. The cinema, in general, does not tell it this way, and it is important to be conscious of that tendency to reach for the whitewash.

This is in no way to deny the hierarchy of the middle class home in those periods, with the man at its apex. On the contrary, the "Upstairs Downstairs" caste system created a class of social "inferiors" to whom the powerless child of the house could more easily relate, and many of the titles below have children striking up fellowship with a gardener, cook or other servant with whom they could treat on more equal terms. More equal terms, of course, than children of the serving class themselves could relate to those same adults. Kipling's childhood was a case in point, his sincere affection for the common soldier and the Indian servant born of a boyhood inclination to mingle with those people and listen to their stories. In simple terms, where the nanny or governess was "in loco parentis", with all that implies, the domestic servant was an adult in whom the child could often more easily confide, a social equivalence (or illusion of it, to be more exact) which has no direct parallel for recent generations.

Abide With Me

Almost Home

US TV sitcom

Beulah

C'est la Vie

The Child

US 1977: Nanny goes to work on a remote farm where the daughter, 11, is recruiting zombies from the local cemetery to help her avenge the death of her mother, with *Rosalie Cole*.

Cinderella and the Fairy Godmother (1898)

Every Little Crook and Nanny	
Exit to Eden	
Fallen Idol	
The Family Game	
Ford Startime –	
"The Turn of the Screw"	US TV play
Ghost Chase	
The Haunted School	Australian ch TV serial c1986: English governess arrives in the outback and sets up school in an abandoned 19 th century inn. With <i>Emil Minty</i> , <i>Grant Navin</i> , <i>Beth Buchanan</i> , <i>Leigh Nicholls</i>
The Haunting of Helen Walker	
Heidi (52)	
House of Cards	
The Hummingbird Tree	
Hurra, Unsere Eltern Sind Nicht Da	
The Innocents	
The Jealous Doll or: The Frustrated Elopement	
Le Jouet	
Kiddie	UK 1911 : Man adopts a sick child and hires a governess who is in fact the mother.
The Kitchen Toto	
Malizia	Italy 1973: "Malicious" – Sicilian widower's 14-year old son sets out to seduce dad's glamorous new "housekeeper" and intended wife. With <i>Alessandro Momo</i>
Mary Poppins	
Ministern	Sweden 1970 : aka "Good-bye Nana". Boy, (<i>Mats Ahfeldt</i> , +/-5) mourning his beloved young nanny, begins to hate his self-centred parents. Describes itself as "a most unusual love story".
The Nanny	
Nanny and the Professor	
The Nightcomers	
The Nursemaid's Surprise	(1898)
Paper Tiger	
Prehysteria 2	
The Rocking Horse Winner	UK 1949 : <i>John Howard Davies</i> (10), troubled by his parents' financial worries, finds he can predict race winners by riding his hobby horse, egged on by the family's new handiman/gardener (John Mills). The family also has a nanny.
Seven Little Australians	
The Sound of Music	
The Spanish Gardener	
They Found a Cave	
The Toy	
Two Much Trouble	
The Unseen	
V Lyudyakh	
The Whipping Boy	
The Winds of Jarrah	
Wolga-Wolga	
The Wonderkid	
The Youngest Profession	

Non-fiction:

Who's Looking After Your Child?	UK 2003 : Gratuitous scaremongering report employing covert camera footage of nannies and child-minders maltreating their charges. Follow-up to a 1998 Yorkshire TV documentary.
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