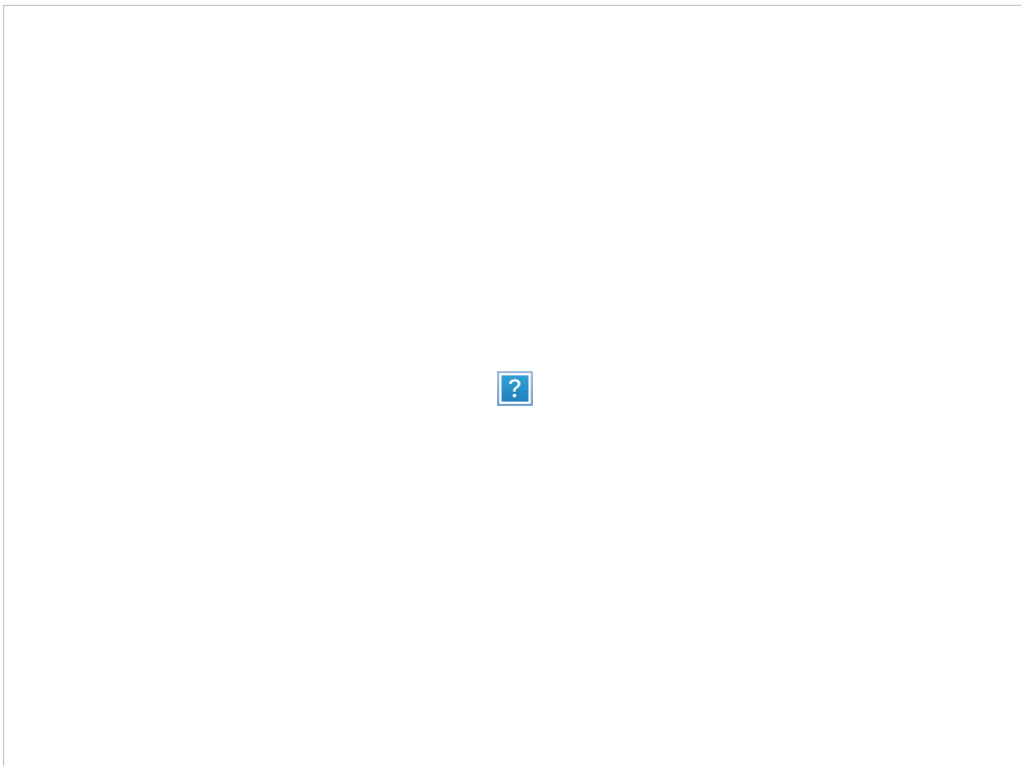


# 'Johanna Enlists' Blu-Ray Review - An Entertaining Silent-Era Wartime Picture From Mary Pickford

[Dillon Gonzales](#)

*Johanna Enlists is a strikingly different and very personal war story. Instead of the guns, cannons and Huns audiences were getting used to in 1918, Mary plays a young woman living quietly with her family on an isolated farm, wondering how she will ever meet a potential husband. When an entire battalion of soldiers march in to be bivouacked on the land, the war is brought home and she suddenly is faced with a wide choice of suitors. Johanna Enlists served as an important means of encouraging enlistments that were still needed even as the film was released only a few months before the war's end.*

For thoughts on *Johanna Enlists*, please check out our discussion on The Video Attic:



## **Video Quality**

*Johanna Enlists* makes its Blu-Ray debut thanks to VCI Entertainment with an admirable 4K restoration effort. The nitrate material was copied to 16mm in 1956 at the request of the Library of Congress. At this time, the first half of Reel Three had disappeared and has not been recovered since. To fill in the missing material, a new section comprised of original stills, titles, and action descriptions taken from the studio cutting continuity has been created. While not ideal, if this is the only way to get this work out in some form, we are glad to have it. With such a brief runtime at play there is no concern about compression artifacts or anything of that sort.

Despite the film clocking in at 105 years of age, this restoration is quite lovely with only minor inconveniences to keep it from being perfect. The film showcases its natural grain well with no wild fluctuations in quality. You will be surprised by the amount of detail present with nice textures on the clothing and within the setting thanks to the enhanced resolution. Black levels present with some decent depth with no major occurrence of black crush or compression artifacts. The contrast is really capably defined, but even after the restoration there is the expected amount of recurring damage such as a light sheen of nicks and scratches. For a silent film of this vintage, VCI Entertainment has treated this one well.

## **Audio Quality**

This Blu-Ray set presents the film with both a Dolby Digital 5.1 and 2.0 lossy audio track that really brings the lovely score to life. The music is the only element to contend with in this track, and it comes through with flattering fidelity with no clipping or age related anomalies. Silent film fans should love the sound quality of the tracks, as the composition fits right in with the narrative. A lossless audio track may have been able to enhance things a bit further, but this delivers what you want from the audio experience.



## Special Features

- **Audio Commentary:** Film Historian Marc Wanamaker provides a very informative commentary track in which he discusses the career and legacy of Mary Pickford, her work on the set beyond performing, her work with her cinematographer, the motivations behind this film and much more that gives great context to the feature.
- **Photo Gallery:** An 11-minute slideshow of photographs from the production are provided here.
- ***A Beast At Bay – An American Biograph Short Film:*** A 13-minute short film starring Mary Pickford directed by D.W. Griffith is provided here which explores the concept of cowardice.

## Final Thoughts

*Johanna Enlists* is an entertaining effort from the legendary Mary Pickford which shows how capably she could convey her emotions with only her physicality and facial features. The narrative is nothing to write home about, but it is a fitfully amusing effort which is not weighed down by the fact that it was made to inspire the troops. The film feels a bit longer than it needs to be at points, but it is a good viewing experience overall. VCI Entertainment has released a Blu-Ray with a great A/V presentation and a couple of good supplemental features which enhance the package further. Silent film fans should take note of this effort from an icon of the era. **Recommended**

*Johanna Enlists* will be available to purchase on Blu-Ray + DVD Combo Pack on July 11, 2023.

**Note: Images presented in this review are not reflective of the image quality of the Blu-Ray.**

***Disclaimer: VCI Entertainment has supplied a copy of this disc free of charge for review purposes. All opinions in this review are the honest reactions of the author.***