



# **The Glass Character**

Margaret Gunning

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In the heady days of the 1920s Jazz Age, people went to the movies almost every day, living vicariously through their heroes: Valentino, Garbo, Fairbanks, and Pickford. But comedians were the biggest draw, and broad slapstick the order of the day, with one very significant exception. Standing beside Keaton and Chaplin in popularity and prowess was a slight, diffident man named Harold Lloyd — the silent era's most influential comedian.

For sixteen year-old Jane he was a living god, and though Lloyd had as many female followers as Gilbert or Barrymore, Jane knew no one could adore him more than she did, and no one would be willing to sacrifice more to be part of his life. But as guileless as Jane may seem, her unaffected vision reveals much about the politics of the major studios, the power plays of the directors, producers, and actors. Her story also reveals much about the human heart and our desire to love against impossible odds.

"Margaret Gunning's fascination with Harold Lloyd and the fabled silent era of Hollywood is compelling and full of surprises . . . Her writing is stunning, surprising, deeply insightful, and well worth the respect of readers and writers." — David West, author, Franklin and McClintock, Caedmon's Hymn, The Tragic Voyage of HMCS Valleyfield

"Having known the man and made a couple of films about him, I came to admire Harold Lloyd more and more. If you want to convert someone to silent films, just show them one, of his features. I'm sure he'd have been fascinated by this book." — Kevin Brownlow, author, The Search for Charlie Chaplin, Behind the Mask of Innocence: Films of Social Conscience in the Silent Era

"Margaret Gunning writes with uncanny grace and unflinching clarity about what it is to be a young girl forgotten by the world . . . Her expressive turns can spur shivers of pleasure." — Montreal Gazette



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