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EAST BAY PREMIERE

Jean Renoir's **BOUDU SAVED FROM DROWNING***

(BOUDU SAUVE DES EAUX) A hilarious spoof of bourgeois mores, BOUDU is a tale of virtue unrewarded. Monsieur Lestingois, a kindly old bookseller, fishes a bearded tramp out of the Seine and tries to turn him into a respectable member of society. But the tramp doesn't care about clothes or living in luxury. Carrying on like a monstrous baby, he cleans his shoes on the bedsheets and makes a shambles of the household; endearingly ungrateful, he manages, along the way, to seduce both Mme. Lestingois and Lestingois' mistress — the maid, Anne-Marie. Success—amatory or financial—doesn't interest him; however; winner of a fortune in a lottery, about to marry Anne-Marie, Boudu deliberately overturns the boat carrying the wedding party and swims off, leaving his benefactor happily hugging his two loves. Impudent, carefree, Boudu overflows with Renoir's zest for life. The good bourgeois, M. Lestingois, is generous to a fault; his wife, whom he fears, reveals a charming live-and-let-live attitude when it comes to sleeping around. But Boudu, ill-equipped to cope

with their pleasantly meaningless existence, opts for anarchy. In its conclusion, the film resembles Rene Clair's A NOUS LA LIBERTE!, made the year before, whose jailbird-industrialist-hero dumps a fortune and his hard, bejewelled wife, and heads for the open road; and, in its loving evocation of Paris between the wars, BOUDU suggests a still earlier Clair comedy, UNDER THE ROOFS OF PARIS, made in 1930. All in all, it was a marvellous period, and BOUDU — produced in 1932, but unreleased in America until 1967 — is one of its chief delights. As Boudu, Michel Simon — who provided himself with the role of his career by producing the film — is natural man incarnate: part baby, part animal, part chaplin's tramp. Good-natured, sweet-tempered, sensual, he is irresistible; but since he lives in a world of his own, there's no living with him. (Hippies will find much to empathize with in the role.) With Charles Grandval as the bookseller, Marcelle Hainia as his wife, Severine Lerczynska as Anne-Marie, etc. Script and direction by Jean Renoir.