

## Document Citation

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# ISN'T LIFE WONDERFUL

1924

99 min.

Rental: C

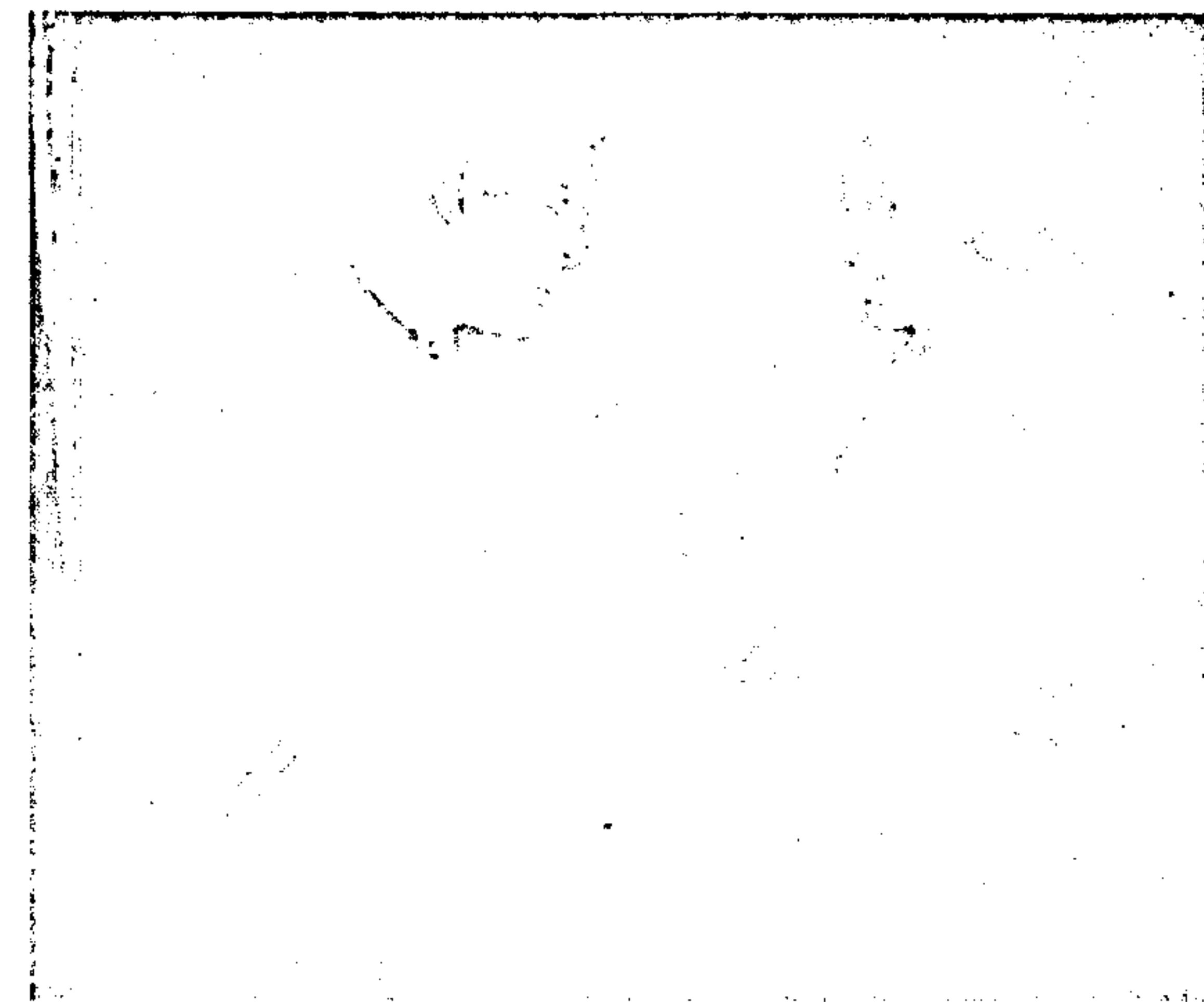
*Directed by D. W. Griffith; screenplay by Griffith, based on a short story by Major Geoffrey Moss; photography by Hendrick Sartov and Hal Sintzenich. With Carol Dempster, Neil Hamilton, Helen Lowell, Erville Alderson.*

When Griffith made ISN'T LIFE WONDERFUL, a highly personal and uncommercial venture, his career was already foundering. Nearly all of his films since 1919, with the exception of WAY DOWN EAST, had lost money. Portraying the hardships of impoverished Europeans following World War I, ISN'T LIFE WONDERFUL was Griffith's last independently produced film; its opening titles suggest his deep, lifelong concern: "This simple story shows: That love makes beautiful all that it touches; that when we LOVE, no trials are ever grim . . . where there is LOVE, there is HOPE and TRIUMPH — which is what MAKES LIFE WONDERFUL."

The film portrays the painful details of struggling to find food when little is available: in a restaurant, waiters are searched for stolen food; Inga (Carol Dempster), the protagonist, is ecstatic when a friend's hen lays an egg; she waits on a long line for hours to buy meat, and by the time her turn comes, the price of meat has risen beyond what she can afford. Offsetting these grim events is the powerful love between Inga and Hans (Neil Hamilton). In the climactic scene, a group of hungry workers pursue the couple, beat them, and rob them of their entire wagon-load of freshly harvested potatoes. Hans despairs over the loss, but Inga clings to him with hope: "I've still got you — and you've still got me — and that's what matters most, isn't it?" At this point, the title "Isn't Life Wonderful?" appears on the screen, and the two lovers embrace.

*"... remarkable new film . . . through countless deft and effective touches in this simple yet deeply stirring narrative, Mr. Griffith again proves himself a brilliant director."*

*—New York Times*



*Isn't Life Wonderful*