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THE LAST LAUGH

Directed by F. W. Murnau

Rental: J

F. W. Murnau and Carl Mayer teamed to make this a film with a single story and concise visual format. Using eloquent images that tell all (with no real need for subtitles) the characters thoughts as well as their actions are never in doubt.

Emil Jannings, an old man, gains social status through his job as the doorman of an extremely plush hotel, complete with resplendent uniform. He relishes the respect and attention paid him. Deprived of his position because of age, he is retired to the job of handing out towels in a men's room.

Through Murnau's innovative use of mobile camera, he traces the emotions as the doorman tragically loses his self-esteem.

Later, upon receiving an unknown inheritance, he is able to regain his pride and live happily. This ending was added on as a panacea for the American audience and although unnecessary, does not detract from the film's quality.

