

# THE RAINES COLLECTION

## A NEWLY DISCOVERED CACHE OF COSTUMES AND CLOTHING FROM THE ESTATE OF ALLA NAZIMOVA



Wig from Salome - Item 1.15.



Blouse by Stephane of Paris - Item 1.10.

**In the fall of 2014 five trunks containing costumes and clothing from the estate of Broadway and silent-era film star Alla Nazimova were discovered in Georgia by Jack Raines, a college student from Columbus.**

**This document presents an inventory of the contents of the first of the five trunks to be opened.**

**Prepared in October 2014 by the  
ALLA NAZIMOVA SOCIETY**



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## INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2014, a trove of costumes and fashionable street wear from the estate of Broadway and silent-film superstar Alla Nazimova was discovered in an unlikely place: a storage building behind a home in Columbus, Ga. Jack Raines, a college student, found the garments neatly packed away in five, long-forgotten steamer trunks in the building behind his grandmother's house.

Among the items Raines found in the first trunk was an unusual headpiece festooned with pearl-like beads. It was, in fact, a key element in one of the most iconic images of the silent film era – the wig worn by Nazimova in “Salome,” a prototype art film that she financed, wrote (under the name Peter M. Winters) and directed (under the name of her faux husband, Charles Bryant) and starred in in 1923. The wig (Item 1.15.), along with the costumes and sets for “Salome,” was designed by Nazimova's protégée, Natacha Rambova, the second wife of Rudolph Valentino, one of the immortals of the silent-film era.



Raines also found a four-piece costume labeled “Salome” (Item 1.16.) in the trunk, along with costumes from Nazimova's storied theatrical career, including:

- A jacket from a 1928 production of Anton Chekov's “The Cherry Orchard” at the Civic Repertory Theatre in New York (Item 1.2.)
- A headdress she wore in the original production of “The Good Earth” at the Guild Theatre in 1932 (Item 1.7)
- A shawl from a revival of August Strindberg's “Ghosts” that Nazimova directed and starred in at the Empire Theatre on Broadway in 1935 (Item 1.5)
- And, perhaps rarest of all, a headpiece designed by Nazimova herself for a production of “Tsar Fyodor” not long after she arrived in the United States from her native Russia in 1905 (Item 1.20).

But how did this trove of historic film and theatre artifacts come to be stored and forgotten for so long so far from Hollywood and Broadway – in Columbus, Ga., a city Nazimova never visited? The answer is actually quite simple.

### A Household Name

Though largely forgotten now, Alla Nazimova was a household name in the earliest decades of the 20th century. Her first fame came on Broadway, where she was considered one of the finest interpreters of European Modernist plays by Chekov, Strindberg and Henrik Ibsen. In just two years, 1908 and 1909, her plays produced \$4 million in revenue for the Shubert Organization, an amount equivalent to \$51 million today. In 1910, the Shuberts renamed one of their houses in her honor, the 39th Street Alla Nazimova Theatre.

## Nazimova Costume and Clothing Discovery 2014

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She was in such demand that in 1917, when she was hired by Metro Pictures, a precursor to MGM, her weekly salary of \$13,000 – about \$200,000 today – made her the highest paid actress in the industry. Soon after she moved to Los Angeles in 1918, she bought an estate on Sunset Boulevard at the western limits of Hollywood. Originally named Hayvenhurst, she jokingly called her home “the Garden of Alla,” a reference to *The Garden of Allah*, a best-selling 1904 novel by Robert Smythe Hichens. The first movies Nazimova made for Metro were box-office hits, but by the mid-1920s her movie career was on the wane – a result of her decision to leave the studio and produce artistic movies, notably including her independent production of “Salome,” which was a box-office bomb.

In 1926, she converted her estate into a residential hotel by adding 25 villas onto the 2.5 acre lot. Within a few years, she sold the hotel and returned to Broadway. The hotel, which the new owners christened the Garden of Allah, became one of the most popular and notorious establishments in Hollywood. It was the riotous West Coast home of members of New York’s Algonquin Round Table, including Dorothy Parker and Robert Benchley. Other famous residents included Humphrey Bogart, the Marx Brothers, Ginger Rogers, Frank Sinatra and even a future president, Ronald Reagan. (Nazimova also happened to be the godmother of Reagan’s future wife, Nancy Davis.)



Nazimova’s first appearance upon her return to Broadway was in “The Cherry Orchard” at the Civic Repertory Theatre, in 1928. It was there that she met Glesca Marshall, a young actress who became her partner. Ten years later, after a series of successful runs on Broadway, Alla returned to Hollywood, where she and Glesca rented Villa 24 at the Garden of Allah. Nazimova appeared in supporting roles in five movies, including her last film, “Since You Went Away,” in 1944. She died on July 13, 1945. As Nazimova’s executor and sole heir, Glesca inherited Alla’s estate, including her costumes and clothing.

Not long after Nazimova’s death, Glesca Marshall and Emily Woodruff became partners. They eventually moved from Los Angeles to Columbus, Emily’s hometown. Nazimova’s costumes and clothing were carefully wrapped, with many items neatly labeled on notepaper from Glesca’s stationery, and packed into the trunks. Glesca died in 1987; Emily died seven years later. The trunks remained on the property when the house was purchased by Jack Raines’ grandmother.

### The Alla Nazimova Society

Founded in 2013, the Alla Nazimova Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting the memory of Nazimova, a great actor, writer, director and producer, and a seminal figure in film and theatre history. Key to the Society’s mission is identifying artifacts related to Nazimova’s life and to her most vivid legacy, the Garden of Allah Hotel, and assuring that they are preserved for the ages. The society is honored by and grateful for the opportunity to help Jack Raines and his family identify and catalog the costumes and clothing they recovered from Nazimova’s forgotten trunks.

Contact: [jackraines34@gmail.com](mailto:jackraines34@gmail.com) | 706-604-2118 - Initial Research: [Alla Nazimova Society](http://AllaNazimovaSociety.com)

Photos Copyright © 2014 Jack Raines



## Item 1.1. Blue Coat - Unknown Production



Notes:



## Item 1.2. Jacket from "The Cherry Orchard," Civic Repertory Theatre, New York, 1928



Publicity still from "The Cherry Orchard," by Anton Chekhov, produced by Civic Repertory Theatre, Inc., at the Civic Repertory Theatre, New York, October 15, 1928. (63 performances)  
L to R: Josephine Hutchinson (Anya), Alla Nazimova (Madame Ranevsky) and unnamed actor.  
Vandamm Studio -- Photographer



Notes:



### Item 1.3. Knitted Shawl with Crocheted Floral Medallions



Notes:



## Item 1.4 Three-Piece Ensemble from Brommer New York



Item Numbers:

Dress: 1.4.1; jacket: 1.4.2; coat: 1.4.3; and three belts: 1.4.4, 1.4.4 and 1.4.6.

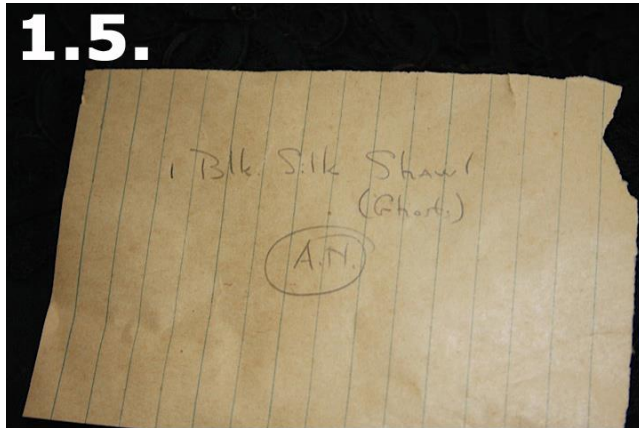
Notes:

Initial research produced no information about Brommer New York.





**Item 1.5. Silk Shawl from "Ghosts" 1935**



Notes:

This revival of Henrik Ibsen's "Ghosts," directed by Alla Nazimova, and in which she played Mrs. Helen Alving, opened on Dec. 12, 1935, at the Empire Theatre on Broadway and closed in February 1936 after 81 performances. The show also traveled, opening at the Biltmore Theatre in Los Angeles in March 1936, and likely later in other cities.



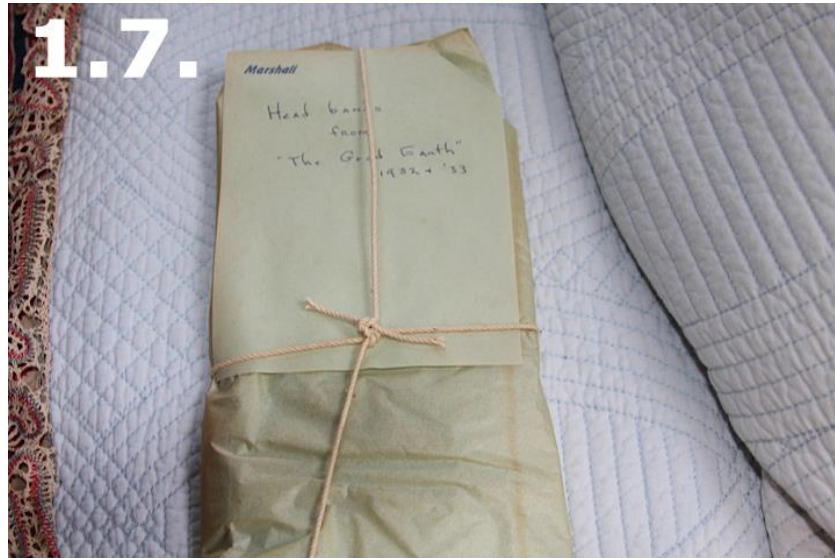
## Item 1.6. Pair of Gold Boots



Notes:



## Item 1.7. Headdress from "The Good Earth"



### Notes:

Nazimova appeared with Claude Rains in the original production of "The Good Earth," written by Owen Davis and Donald Davis based on the novel by Pearl Buck, which opened at the Guild Theatre in New York on Oct. 17, 1932, and ran for 56 performances, closing in December. This item is not identifiable in the few photos from the production that are available online.



## Item 1.8. Gray Skirt



Notes:



**Item 1.9. Appliqué and Green Velvet Item, Possibly a Hat**



Notes:



## Item 1.10. Stephane Blouse



### Notes:

This appears to be the blouse Nazimova wore in a sitting for photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn, circa 1910 to 1916. The photos were later donated to the George Eastman House Still Photograph Archive in Rochester, N.Y. Other photos from the sitting are available on the Alla Nazimova Society website at [this link](#).



## Item 1.11. Three Pairs of Long-Sleeved Gloves and One Pair of Leggings



### Notes:

We had originally thought the long-sleeved gloves (1.11.1, 1.11.3 and 1.11.4) were opera gloves but they are fingerless, and so may have had some other use.

We're calling the fourth pair (1.11.2) leggings until they can be accurately identified.



## Item 1.12. Possible Peasant Costume



Notes:





**Item 1.13. Red Velvet Item, Possibly a Hat**



Notes:



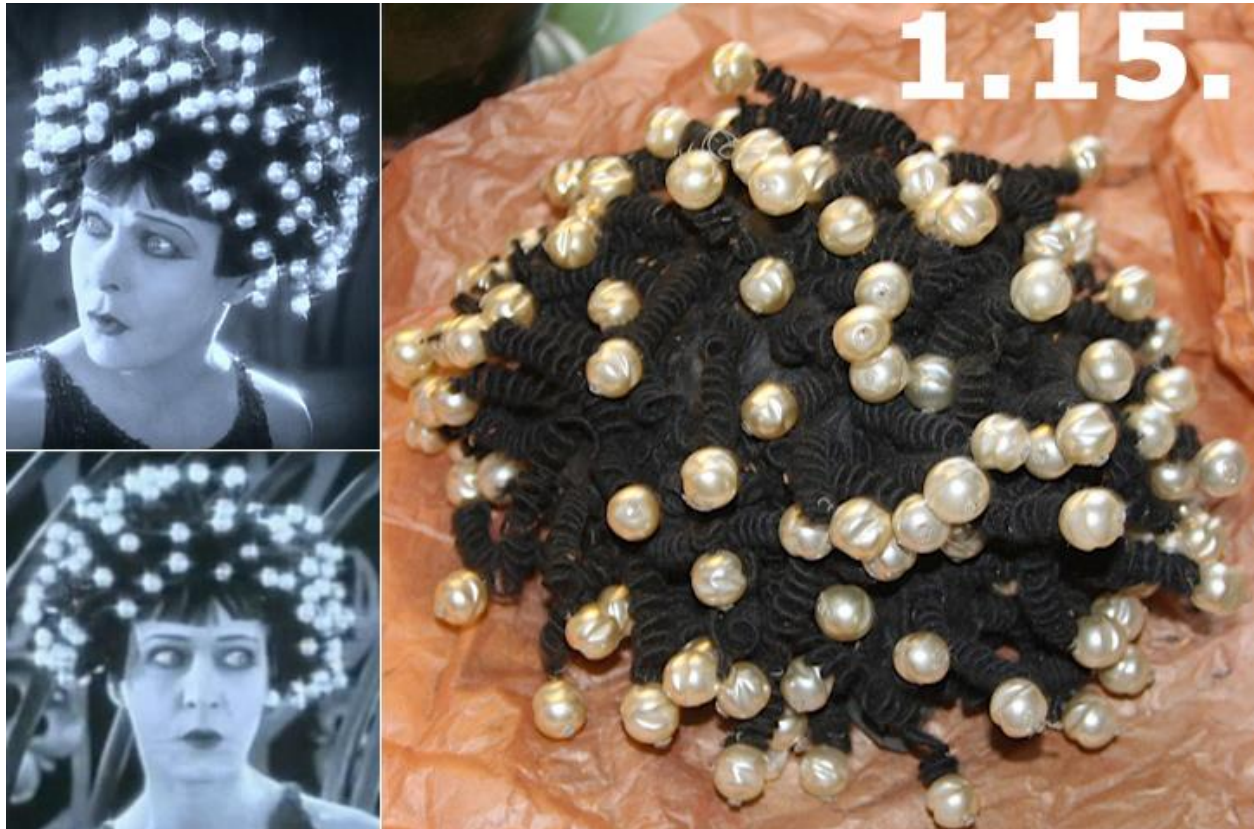
## Item 1.14. Re-Embroidered Lace Blouse



Notes:



## Item 1.15. Salome Wig

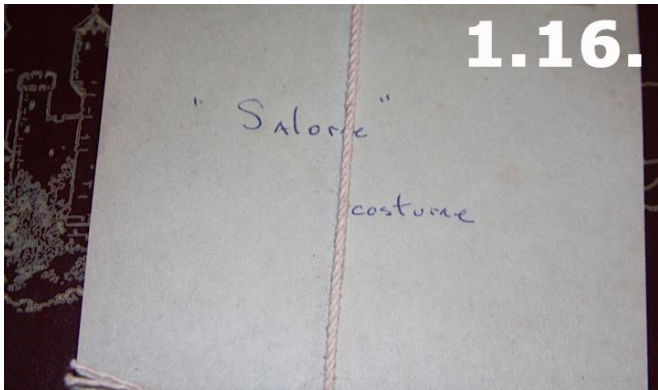


### Notes:

The wig was designed so that the pearlescent beads would shimmer when Nazimova, as Salome, moved her head in the light. To view this effect, "Salome" online at YouTube – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOCuAbdRMhI> – and start watching at around the 8:45 minute mark.



**Item 1.16. Four Pieces Labeled "Salome Costume"**



Continued next page....



**Item 1.16. Continued.**



**Notes:**

We have been unable to locate this costume in "Salome," and it doesn't appear to fit Rambova's style for the film. It may have been mislabeled upon storage or perhaps it was created for but not used in the movie.



## Item 1.17. Satin Skirt



Notes:



## Item 1.18. Button Hooks for High Top Shoes



Notes:

The handles may be crafted from celluloid.



## Item 1.19. Taupe Dress with Beige Embroidery

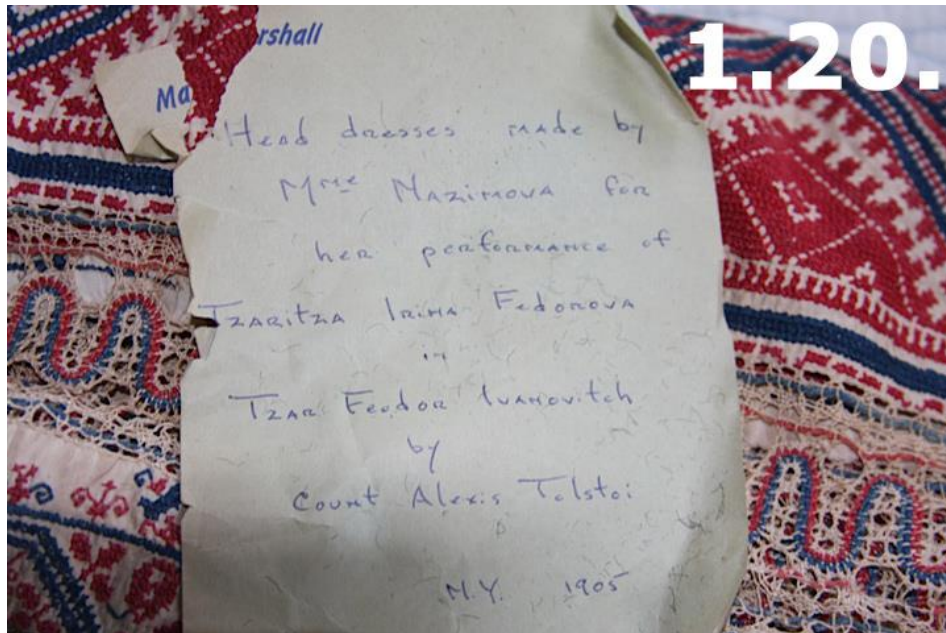


Notes:





## Item 1.20. Headdress from "Tsar Fyodor" 1905



Continued....



## Item 1.20. Continued



*Nazimova and  
Orlenev in Tsar Fyodor, New  
York, 1905. The costumes,  
notably more spectacular than  
those in the Moscow Art Theatre  
production, were designed  
by Nazimova.*



*Nazimova and Orlenev  
in Tsar Fyodor*

### Notes:

“Tsar Fyodor” was the second play Nazimova appeared in after she arrived in the United States in 1905. It was performed in Russian for émigré audiences in Lower Manhattan. She also made the costumes. The headdress is not shown in either of the only two photos of the production that are known to exist. Shown here, the photos were published on page 117 of *Nazimova: A Biography*, by Gavin Lambert.



## LIST OF PLAYS

### Broadway Productions

*The Mother*

[Play, Drama, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [The Mother]

Apr 25, 1939 – Apr 1939

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Christine Mannon]

Oct 26, 1931 – Mar 1932

*Hedda Gabler*

[Play, Drama, Revival]

Starring: Alla Nazimova [Hedda Tesman]

Staged by Alla Nazimova

Nov 16, 1936 – Closing date unknown

*A Month in the Country*

[Play, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Natalia Petrovna]

Mar 17, 1930 – May 1930

*Ghosts*

[Play, Drama, Revival]

Directed by Alla Nazimova

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Mrs. Helen Alving]

Dec 12, 1935 – Feb 1936

*Katerina*

[Play, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Katerina Ivanovna]

Feb 25, 1929 – Mar 1929

*The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles*

[Play, Fantasy, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [The Priestess]

Feb 18, 1935 – Mar 1935

*The Cherry Orchard*

[Play, Comedy, Revival]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Ranevskaya, Lyubov Andreevna]

Oct 15, 1928 – Dec 1928

*Doctor Monica*

[Play, Drama, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Monica]

Nov 06, 1933 – Nov 1933

*Dagmar*

[Play, Drama, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Countess Dagmar]

Jan 22, 1923 – Mar 1923

*The Cherry Orchard*

[Play, Comedy, Revival]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Ranevskaya, Lyubov Andreevna]

Mar 06, 1933 – Apr 1933

*A Doll's House*

[Play, Drama, Revival]

Performer: Alla Nazimova

Apr 29, 1918 – May 1918

*The Good Earth*

[Play, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [O-Lan]

Oct 17, 1932 – Dec 1932

*Hedda Gabler*

[Play, Drama, Revival]

Performer: Alla Nazimova

Apr 08, 1918 – Apr 1918

*Mourning Becomes Electra*

[Play, Drama, Original]

*The Wild Duck*

[Play, Drama, Original]

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Performer: Alla Nazimova  
Mar 11, 1918 – Apr 1918

*'Ception Shoals*  
[Play, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova  
Jan 10, 1917 – Closing date unknown

*That Sort*  
[Play, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova  
Nov 06, 1914 – Nov 1914

*Bella Donna*  
[Play, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova  
Nov 11, 1912 – Jan 1913

*The Marionettes*  
[Play, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova  
Dec 05, 1911 – Jan 1912

*Little Eyolf*  
[Play, Drama, Original]

Starring: Alla Nazimova [Mrs. Rita Allmers]  
Apr 18, 1910 – May 1910

*The Comet*  
[Play, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova  
Dec 30, 1907 – Feb 1908

### Plays Not on Broadway (Incomplete List)

*War Brides*

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Joan]  
Orpheum Circuit (Vaudeville)  
1915

*Tsar Fyodor*

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Tsaritzza Irina  
Fedoneva]  
New York, 1905

*A Doll's House*

[Play, Revival]

Performer: Alla Nazimova  
Nov 18, 1907 – Dec 1907

*The Master Builder*

[Play, Drama, Revival]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Hilde Wangel]  
Sep 23, 1907 – Nov 1907

*Comtesse Coquette*

[Play, Comedy, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova  
Sep 02, 1907 – Sep 1907

*Comtesse Coquette*

[Play, Comedy, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova  
Apr 12, 1907 – Jun 15, 1907

*Hedda Gabler*

[Play, Drama, Revival]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Hedda Tesman]  
Mar 11, 1907 – Apr 1907

*A Doll's House*

[Play, Revival]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Nora Helmer]  
Jan 14, 1907 – Feb 1907

*Hedda Gabler*

[Play, Drama, Revival]

Performer: Alla Nazimova [Hedda Tesman]  
Nov 13, 1906 – Dec 1906

*The Chosen People*

[Play, Drama, Original]

Performer: Alla Nazimova  
1905 New York



## FILMOGRAPHY

*Since You Went Away*

Zofia Koslowska (as Nazimova)

1944

*In Our Time*

Zofia Orwid (as Nazimova)

1944

*The Bridge of San Luis Rey*

Doña Maria – The Marquesa (as Nazimova)

1944

*Blood and Sand*

Senora Augustias (as Nazimova)

1941

*Escape*

Emmy Ritter (as Nazimova)

1940

*My Son*

Ana Silva

1925

*The Redeeming Sin*

Joan (as Nazimova)

1925

*Madonna of the Streets*

Mary Carlson/Mary Ainsleigh (as Nazimova)

1924

*Salome*

Salome, stepdaughter of Herod (as Nazimova)

1923/I

*A Doll's House*

Nora Helmer

1922

*Camille*

Marguerite Gautier (as Nazimova)

1921

*Billions*

Princess Triloff (as Nazimova)

1920

*Madame Peacock*

Jane Goring/Gloria Cromwell (as Nazimova)

1920

*The Heart of a Child*

Sally Snape (as Nazimova)

1920

*Stronger Than Death*

Sigrid Fersen

1920

*The Brat*

The Brat

1919

*The Red Lantern*

Mahlee & Blanche Sackville

1919

*Out of the Fog*

Faith & Eve

1919

*Eye for Eye*

Hassouna (as Nazimova)

1918

*A Woman of France* (short)

1918



*Toys of Fate*  
Zorah/Hagah  
1918

*War Brides*  
Joan  
1916

*Revelation*  
Joline (as Nazimova)  
1918

## **Acknowledgements**

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