



**Sex, drugs, art, booze, jazz, and Berlin...  
A wild child is ready to party like it's 1929.**

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# LULU

A real-life fantasy

Screenplay by Samuel Garza Bernstein

Based on his non-fiction novel

*Actress Louise Brooks is in 1929 Berlin playing the role of her life: "Lulu"—a childlike woman whose sexual desires destroy her as well as the men in her life. Lulu and Louise became happily and hopelessly enmeshed. Her relationship with her director is at the center of the tale as she grapples with trying to make sense of her life. It's a modern story of what it means to be a woman, an actress, and a sexual being.*

She was the laughing girl with the black helmet of hair and the sexy bangs... You don't have to know who she was to be drawn in. Every photograph of Louise Brooks demands your attention. She was something new in America: The girl next door who actually liked sex.

That was revolutionary in 1929. In many ways, it still is.

Louise's fresh-faced acceptance of her own desires was part of the public persona that made her famous. She embodied the flapper—a modern kind of girl who saw no reason to deny herself pleasure, even if it took her over the edge.

Decadent pre-war Berlin and Hollywood provide the backdrop and mood. Louise rides the crest of the Flapper era hedonism. Sex and experimentation are the keys to understanding the journey of the heart and the path of the artist.

The central relationship is between Louise and her director Pabst. She is a hard-drinking hedonist who sees pleasure as a way of feeling alive. He is a conservative married man with seemingly few secrets. Together they are propelled by a curious mixture of attraction, personal history, and identification with the story of Pandora's Box. Louise and Pabst's affair takes wild twists and turns during filming. But his respect and feeling for her emerges fully. He asks sacrifices of her throughout—not in service to his ego—but to the film Lulu.

She plays the iconic Lulu. Louise Brooks and Lulu had everything in common, and the actress and the role became hopelessly, dangerously enmeshed. Even Lulu's descent into prostitution feels almost joyful in the hands of Louise, who refuses to judge the character. Her death at the hands of a homicidal madman in the film becomes the birth of the real Louise Brooks.

But as the character Lulu careens toward destruction and death, an entirely different destiny seems to await Louise. She believes she is at the start of a great career. And we think so too. It's a bumpy ride, but we still expect that most inevitable of Hollywood endings, where the girl goes out a chorus girl and comes back a star. Did that happen? Was it what she really wanted?

Whatever Lulu's fate, Louise's own acceptance of self, of her sexuality, of living life on her own terms feels like a victory—and a kind of bizarre flip-side to the #metoo movement. What she accomplishes in Berlin is epic—she discovers herself as an artist and as a woman. A journey of self-discovery still totally relevant today.