



# Menni's Movies Top 100

I'm a child of the eighties. I worked on this list for over a year. It's incredibly personal. In the nineties, depression hit me hard, thus i discovered crying and arthouse cinema. In the 2000s, film festivals were enjoyed, downloading became real and i moved back. In the 2010s, year and decade reviews started, plus i wisely quit stars & linear rating. In the 2020s, ridiculous return to the 80s was set into motion, for the rest of my life.

So there you have it, some decades will be overrepresented, always for ample reason. Many good things have been lost, evolving from rental in the small town i grew up in to endless digital hauls, superbly grainy vhs to way too smooth 4K, tiny black & white television to gigantic 3D IMAX. All movies are amazing, now go expand your horizons!

## \*\*\*\* HONORABLE MENTIONS \*\*\*\*

Leading up to the carefully crafted end result, here are some titles that did not make the cut, for a wide variety of reasons. These ten movies represent a whole lot more, all in their own unique way. A list like this is a puzzle without a definite solution.

**'i feel like my head's just gonna explode or something and i don't know what to do..'**



### **Into My Heart**

(1998, Sean Smith & Anthony Stark)

Claire Forlani's giggle is one of the best things in motion picture history, but it hardly compensates cheating on your boyfriend with his best friend. Eye patch suicide contrasts Pooh bridge cuteness, lifesaver candy chewed on in a car here became a beloved metaphor. Unknown, underrated, all mine *Into My Heart* came along at the exact right time.

Movies offer great comfort: this was the last film i ever watched (post-breakup) with my first love, realizing that we never fucked up *this* badly. A couple of years later, all video stores were dumping vhs tapes in favor of dvd. Somehow i found out online (!) that one store in Eindhoven had just one copy of *Into My Heart*. Received it for free.

I enjoy a good love story more than anything in the world. Intellectual or sentimental; have someone's heart broken and i'll always cry along. Laughter is just as important.

## Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans

(1927, F.W. Murnau)

While *Wings* officially won the very first Oscar for best picture, *Sunrise* was given the award for best unique & artistic production in the same category. And so for historical value alone, it's a no-brainer in any all-time list. However, a most recent revisit brought out the moralist feminist in me. You see, it's about a woman who almost gets murdered by her husband, then immediately forgives him. City woman is evil. Beautiful, just a tad bit annoying.



No worries though, Murnau is still in the top 25. *Sunset Boulevard* (1950, Billy Wilder) however, another one that slightly suffered from re-evaluation, even after having been to the actual street myself, is not. Any 'murder mystery' part tends to get me bored.



'you're so right, dear..'

Women and children first, but not in all-time movie lists, check out IMDb, there's still a long way to progressively go! High up in my own list are Italian, French and Dutch kids, and i would have loved to include **Shirley Temple** as well, but those early movies are just too sugary. She was 18 in most enjoyable, best screenplay Oscar winner *The Bachelor and the Bobby-Soxer* (1947, Irving Reis), a classic age-difference romcom and the very last title to drop from this Top 100. Shirley is sparkling in here.

*Mouchette* (1967, Robert Bresson) and *L'Atalante* (1934, Jean Vigo) are questionable omissions, proving once again that for some reason, classic French cinema has always appealed to me more than its Italian counterpart. Antonioni, Fellini, Visconti, scusi.

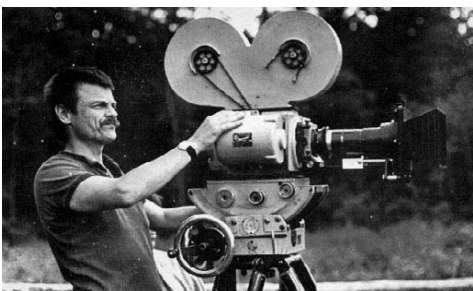
## Persona

(1966, Ingmar Bergman)

Bergman always reaches the head, but never the heart, a psychologically fascinating phenomenon. In his best film out of many masterpieces, nurse and patient mirror each other in an increasingly concerning poetic grip. The legendary Swedish director not necessarily wanted his audience to understand, but to feel. Which makes me think.



Preferences can change, often related to real life experience, but some directors just don't fully connect and never will. Also absent: Akira Kurosawa and Alfred Hitchcock.



Your cue to stop taking me seriously, know who else starting with an A is shamelessly missing in action? It's that revered Russian maestro, justified deity for any film student and those who are just discovering world cinema, **Andrei Tarkovsky!!** *Andrey Rublyov* (1966) was in my lists forever, but it's time to admit that while pièce de résistance, it's not personal.



## Kilkenny Cross


(2006, Eric Oosthoek)

Moviemeter.nl was my go to area for years, before realizing it's just as inept as all other online places when it comes to feigned interest and handling of trolls. However, through it, one day this scriptwriter contacted me, recruiting Menni as Magic: The Gathering consultant for a new Dutch television film. We met a couple of times, i visited the magical set in Amsterdam and attended a nice prerelease screening.

It's a poorly directed, average production, confirmed by its writer. And my name was spelled wrong on the end credits; my only IMDb entry is faulty, story of my life. However, the cute film has a bunch of lines from *my* tournament reports, poetry, plus a well-executed mother-son chatting scene.

### Additional Crew

Previous · 1

 **Kilkenny Cross**  
★ 7.0 TV Movie  
story contributor (uncredited)

### Personal details

Alternative name Menno Peters



## The Stendhal Syndrome

(*La Sindrome di Stendhal*, 1996, Dario Argento)

Asia Argento walks right into paintings and that's the least bizarre thing of this horror based on a fascinating psychosomatic condition also known as *really* feeling your art. Probably because of that, *The Stendhal Syndrome* has become my favorite Giallo. The subgenre, with all its peculiar dubbing and frequent absence of logic, might take some time and effort to fully appreciate. Personality changes, role reversal, boxing, trauma, Ennio Morricone, Uffizi and the first Italian CGI effects make this a razor-sharp classic.

During the Amsterdam Fantastic Film Festival 2001, we had the honor of sitting right behind Argento during a screening of his latest. Before it started though, the film fell off the projector, dropped right on the floor with a loud thud... Dario smiled, i think.



## Alien

(1979, Ridley Scott)

In 2003, a world record for film watching (or as i liked to call it: a world record sitting in a cinema, talking over movies) was attempted by a crowd of people in Amsterdam, sponsored by Pringles. I joined as a spectator here and there and a definite highlight was an early morning showing of the entire *Alien* quadrilogy. Like my future awesome friend who was in the audience too, i'm a staunch defender of part 3, but the original remains the best. Halfway through though, i'm always bored for a couple of minutes, so sorry Sigourney, you're out. Fueling further alienation, male co-stars Tom Skerritt, Ian Holm, John Hurt and Harry Dean Stanton will all be represented by other movies.



Whenever i try to come up with a list of favorite actors, **Brion James** pops up soon. Mostly known as replicant in science fiction majesty *Blade Runner* (1982, Ridley Scott), he came to my attention first through personal cult classic *House III* (a.k.a. *The Horror Show*, 1989, James Isaac & David



Blythe). Oh boy, did that chair scene electrify me, not to mention Dedee Pfeiffer in the obligatory shower! I have always held a soft spot for this underrated cheesy shocker. Perfect villain faced Brion, who died in 1999, is a supporting actor legend in my book.

The amount of missing horror movie directors is scary: John Carpenter, Tobe Hooper, Wes Craven and George A. Romero will murder me, if i don't kill myself over *Society* (1989, Brian Yuzna) and *An American Werewolf in London* (1981, John Landis) first.



Every movie fan goes through this 'quirky directors' phase. And there's nothing wrong with remaining a fan boy/girl forever! For some reason though, every usual suspect in this area, be it **Tim Burton** (who received a career award at AFFF 2008 where i got to see him up close), David Lynch, Jim Jarmusch, Abel Ferrara or Terry Gilliam, they were all heroes forever at some point in time, but have faded from favorites slightly. Struggling to remain on top, many of their peculiar shenanigans came close, but no cigar.

'this is better than lab, this is life..'



## Gross Anatomy

(1989, Thom Eberhardt)

Like a college Breakfast Club except with actual studying, *Gross Anatomy* cuts into the heart. Right mindset is needed though: approached with post-eighties cynicism, with a misguided idea that cute romcom and deep humanism can't mix, the film will fail. And i am so glad i discovered this gem decades later, now wondering how i have survived all those years without knowing Daphne Zuniga; somehow i completely missed out on her during the heighdays. This nice film, about med students meeting life & death, is my current frontrunner for best jogging, nominated for best pizza and best basketball and yes, there is a banana. Oh and besides Matthew Modine, solid as always, the guy who plays the stressed-depressed student? It's Todd Field, who would go on to direct Oscar darlings *In the Bedroom*, *Little Children* and *Tár*, objectively better cinema, but objectivity is extremely overrated, because it doesn't exist. Here, gut instinct reigns.



As for those peculiar categories, it all started when i got tired of seeing the exact same lists over and over again, the same awards over and over again: best actor, best actress, best director, best film, etcetera. Everyone should know now that **Michael Douglas**



(*Wall Street*) and **Jodie Foster** (*The Accused*) deliver some of the best acting of the eighties, there really is no need to reiterate, over and over again. So now in my book they're nominated for best sunrise/sunset and best smoking respectively. They're two of many, menni eighties classics that ultimately, unfortunately fell out of the top 100.



Pregnant teen romcomdram **For Keeps?** (1988, John G. Avildsen) is just as valid to be appreciated and liked as holocaust überdocu **Shoah** (1985, Claude Lanzmann) and they more than deserve one co-existing honorable mention.



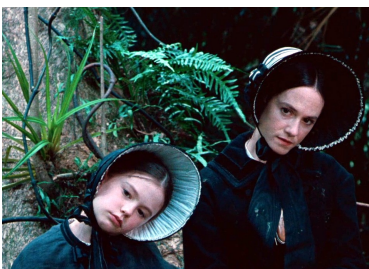
The decade that i love most, mostly for nostalgic reasons but also because of a wildly open mind, is widely regarded as the worst decade for films ever; such a cliché. From teen joyride flick *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986, John Hughes) to arthouse road movie *Paris, Texas* (1984, Wim Wenders), from body horror to world cinema, i beg to differ and i'm all in. Still, even totally funny Zucker-Abrahams-Zucker comedies are all out.



## Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael

(1990, Jim Abrahams)

Winona Ryder shall remain my biggest idol forever, black-pink bullying romcomkitsch *Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael* being the film that triggered this healthy obsession straight through my most difficult years. I still absolutely love it, perhaps even more than *Heathers* and *Mermaids*, more than her deserved consecutive Oscar nominations for *The Age of Innocence* and *Little Women*. In the early nineties i also hunted down her lesser-known films and found one vhs copy of *Square Dance* (1987, Daniel Petrie) in a video store, a special feeling that will never be matched by today's online world, even with quite a few exceptional digital rarities in my top 100. Winona finds herself with only one entry though and that's awkward, but at the same time it's beautiful.



My list is already embarrassingly chock-full of nineties titles, that era of my depression, my rebirth, my discovery of binge-watching quality cinema. Unforgettable **Anna Paquin** (*The Piano*) and **Anna Chlumsky** (*My Girl*) have become two of the main victims;



it just feels so nauseatingly wrong to drop them from the absolute upper echelons of movie memories. But at least they're not alone, unlike me during those pre-internet, bulletin board system & sneak preview years, we didn't even have a proper IMDb yet! *Leaving Las Vegas* to *Twelve Monkeys*, even the highly popular titles were awesome.



American basketball comedy joy **White Men Can't Jump** (1992, Ron Shelton) and exceptionally hard-hitting Australian romantic schizophrenidrama **Angel Baby** (1995, Michael Rymer) both are seriously recommended as well.





## **Made in Hong Kong** (*Heung Gong jai jo*, 1997, Fruit Chan)

For 25 years, all i remembered was that mesmerizing cemetery scene, screaming the name of a dead friend. I saw *Made in Hong Kong* with my mother in an Amsterdam cinema, which once again proves how i inherited her open-mindedness. Back then, i was susceptible to hysterical chaos much more than i am today. Memories are fond.

Every movie fan, in fact every teenager these days, goes through this 'Asian Phase': suddenly everything western sucks and everything eastern is cool, hip and happening or the worst: spiritual. The trick is to balance things, avoid getting stuck in immature rebellious nonsense forever. In the mid-nineties, i myself might have drifted towards 'depressing' arthouse a bit too much, devouring awesome films like *Kids* (1995, Larry Clark), *Gummo* (1997, Harmony Korine), *Christiane F.* (1981, Uli Edel) and especially *Go, Go Second Time Virgin* (*Yuke yuke nidome no shojo*, 1969, Kôji Wakamatsu) to prove how different i was. Having kicked them all out, who is the different one now?



## **Fan Girl** (2020, Antoinette Jadaone)

This personal drama turning societal, about universal cuteness and dangers of idolizing, pitches naivety against numb temptation. And it's so so fucking good, shocking even; debunking superstardom through a shifting perspective, questioning morale both ways. Not feeling anything anymore, the desire to feel *something*, never felt this sadly real.

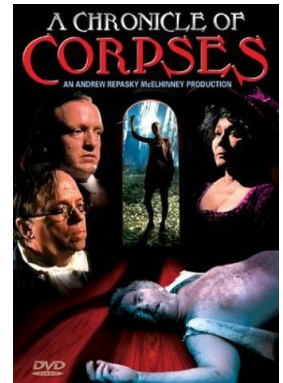
Filipino films have been my best discovery of the millennium so far: two other titles, one of which is directed by Jadaone as well, are in my top 30. Definitely keep an eye on *Fan Girl* too; it nabs a guaranteed top 10 entry in my next decade review, 2029.

Strict rules aren't necessary, but new movies should be shelved a while before being considered for an all-time list. For this reason alone, two most recent best of the year award winners *Babylon* (2022, Damien Chazelle) and *The Fallout* (2021, Megan Park) are still on the substitute bench. Some of their peers from earlier decades drifted from huge initial impact a bit, like *Strange Colours* (2017, Alena Lodkina) and *Garden State* (2004, Zach Braff), very capable of pinch-hitting. However, honorable apologies go to **Anthony Hopkins**, three of his films have missed the boat by an inch: *The Elephant Man*, *The Silence of the Lambs* and most recently, *The Father*.



To round off this extensive, quite over-the-top section of honorable mentions, my appreciated influential movie buddy must be set in the bloemetjes. Over the course of 25 turbulent years and oh how we wouldn't have wanted it any other way, through him i struggled through, discovered, re-evaluated over a dozen films that have all become contenders for my ultimate countdown, starting in a sec.

Life wouldn't have been the same, certainly less awesome, without **A Chronicle of Corpses** (2000) and the too low supply of Andrew Repasky McElhinney's other stylish yet provocative masterpieces. He also introduced me to the intoxicating and quite naked dream world of Jean Rollin (*Le frisson des vampires*, 1971), while teaching me the true value of the entire Godzilla franchise, all seventy years of it. Previously mentioned Argento, Fulci/Lenzi/Bava, but even insufferable *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980, Ruggero Deodato) and incredible *What Dreams May Come* (1998, Vincent Ward) will be safe with you.



Here we go. Just don't start yapping about missing titles, genres, languages or Peter Jackson. For every outed blockbuster, there's no Bollywood either. For every black life that matters, there's no Chinese delegation, none. I'm hardly into biopics and crime!



## 100. Lake Tahoe

(2008, Fernando Eimbcke)

Filmed near the place where the meteorite hit that destroyed the dinosaurs, this is the calm balmy story of a young man looking for a car part, a Mexican road movie without a trip. Taking life slowly, several people are met: an old man having breakfast with his dog, a young mother who knows nothing about cars (or does she?), and a kung fu kid actually able to fix engines. Coming to terms with a deceased father and a depressed mother, a hammock and a hug offer comfort, slightly absurd, heartwarmingly simple.

Steady shots of crossroads and streets, buildings and backyards, combine well with black screen interludes that always last a little too long enough to realize it's done on purpose. These lil moments of contemplation are great for identification, accepting life the way it is. At first Juan wants to leave, in the end he chooses to stay. Then, the peculiar title is finally kind of explained: never having been to the actual lake, a pretty picture.



'i tried to have cybersex once, but i kept getting a busy signal..'



## 99. You've Got Mail

(1998, Nora Ephron)

If you're unable to enjoy this harmless 90s romcom, you probably don't like movies at all. And that is the exact kind of judgmental attitude that *You've Got Mail* happens to be arguing against: *The Godfather* versus *Pride & Prejudice*, Starbucks versus coffee, cute little bookstore versus giant evil corporation. Online, without knowing they know each other in real life, Kathleen and Joe compliment and complement each other just fine, chatting and flirting, peacefully co-existing like arthouse and blockbuster should.

Tom Hanks excels at backspacing a sentence and scooping up caviar, Meg Ryan steals the show with physical comedy, her handling of a cart in the supermarket echoing the very best black & white 40s classics. The ultimate 90s pairing had superb chemistry.

Supporting cast is simply sparkling. Personal favorite Heather 'excuse me?' Burns always cracks me up with delight, Steve Zahn is a perfect friendly dufus, Parker Posey a perfect bitchy wife, etcetera, etcetera. List is long, having not even mentioned the adorable kids.



'goodnight, dear void..'

The most important reason for having this film deep in the heart however, is personal. For many years up to 2016, i have been e-mailing back and forth with the best Cure buddy, a Belgian girl. While miles apart physically, intellectually, probably emotionally as well, we adored and quoted *You've Got Mail*. I don't know what happened to her.



## 98. Romeo und Julia im Schnee

(1920, Ernst Lubitsch)

Twenty years before he directed *The Shop around the Corner*, a James Stewart starring film that *You've Got Mail* adorably ripped off half a century later, German born Lubitsch turned the most classic love story of all into a very funny, completely silent, cute short film. Long live not adding music decades later, because no matter how good intentions are, it always pushes the viewers into a certain direction that was not in the

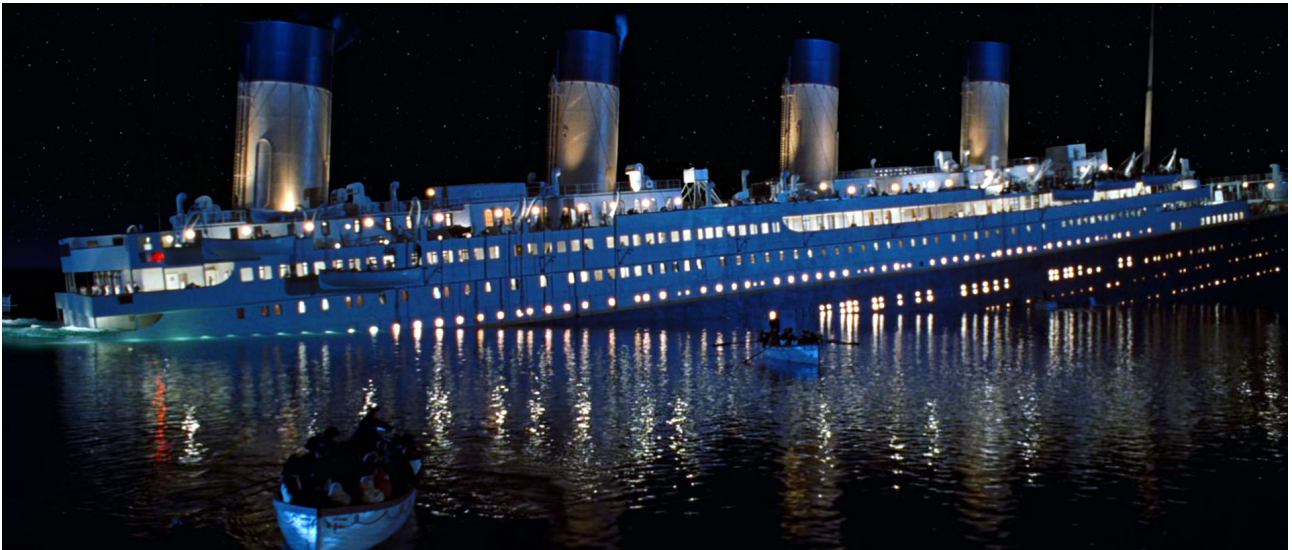
original. *Romeo and Juliet in the Snow* – certainly not the last version in this list – has ridiculous costumes, lots of love, a hefty snowball fight, but most refreshing: a prank twist on the tragic ending. Shakespeare would have approved and laughed out loud.



## 97. Let Them All Talk

(2020, Steven Soderbergh)

Talking, talking, talking. Can you imagine, it won't be long before the world of cinema will have to do without Meryl Streep! Partially improvised *Let Them All Talk* should be enjoyed even more when i'm 74 myself. On a cruise ship, it hands the torch to a next generation: Lucas Hedges (with two titles in this top 100, better than Streep already), discusses pretense and prejudice, insecurity and envy, death and young hope of love. Dianne Wiest wins all board games, in a future-proof talkie that because of untimely release, missed the boat on both my year and decade review. It rose to the surface.



## 96. Titanic

(1997, James Cameron)

It's been 27 years and we can still smell the fresh paint! Suicidal on stern and happy on bow, king of the world and heart of the ocean, *Titanic* was a true cinematic event of a lifetime. A perfect balance of disaster movie and costume drama profited big time off of tragedy, juggling moral responsibility and historical accuracy to ice-cold sinking emotional effect with dated vfx, starring always splendid Billy Zane and Kathy Bates. It is highly recommended to also watch comparably excellent *A Night to Remember* (1958, Roy Ward Baker), but i can't deny often feeling more at home on upper deck.



## 95. Napoleon (1927, Abel Gance)

One of the most groundbreaking films in history, oh and it tells the story of Napoleon's early years (the original plan was six films), uses so many impressive techniques it's mindblowing: camera movement, superimposition, Keller-Dorian cinematography, and that's just the tip of the iceberg. After five hours, *La Grande Finale* involves the rarely seen epic Polyvision triptych; widescreen on steroids. It deserves a standing ovation.

*Napoléon vu par Abel Gance* was released in the same year as the first film with sound *The Jazz Singer*, what a time to be alive that must've been. However, supposed to be the end of civilization 2012 was not bad either: we started our California road trip as honored guests in a majestic Oakland cinema, to see the finally restored masterpiece in all its glory, then have dinner at the table with legendary reviewer Leonard Maltin. And what do i remember most about that day? The snowball fight opening scene.



## 94. Cleopatra (1963, Joseph L. Mankiewicz)

Adjusted to inflation, one of the most expensive films in history is still up there with the modern blockbuster franchises. And it has a marvelous amount of talking, feeling like a proper stage play. Nevertheless, it's all buildup to those two major epic scenes: the entrance in Rome and the naval battle, while honorable mentions go to Caesar's assassination/cremation and Cleopatra's suicide. Elizabeth Taylor in the title role and Richard Burton as Marcus Antonius only added to the historical celebrity madness.

**'the corridors are dark, gentlemen.. but you mustn't be afraid, i am with you..'**



## 93. The Ghouls

(2003, Chad Ferrin)

Adjusted to inflation, one of the cheapest films in history is still down there with the bottom of the barrel. Could be mistaken for a poor zombie flick, but *The Ghouls* is a gritty look on sensationalism, capitalism and homelessness. Rape, cannibalism, skinning, all those fun things to do on a random night in the underbelly of L.A., get outclassed by explicit use of the word 'retard', aimed at a real

life retard who feels inspired by *Taxi Driver*. The offender is a guy with a nasty cough, a camera and a car, struggling with both work and love, when suddenly he runs into a bunch of scary creatures; the opportunity of a lifetime, a chance to make a living.

Timothy Muskatell has the softest hand i've ever had the pleasure of shaking; meeting him at AFFF 2009 definitely helped his status as one of my absolute favorite actors. Buddy Chad Ferrin wasn't present, Timothy told me that was because of aerophobia, knowledge making his later film *Exorcism at 60,000 Feet* (2019) slightly interesting.

Production company Crappy World Films Inc. is one of those many, many antidotes to the idea that money makes the movie. *The Ghouls* is like watching a soap opera with much darker themes, including a sound that sounds just like my loud doorbell. Yaiks.



## 92. Gremlins

(1984, Joe Dante)

No bright light, no water, no feeding after midnight, remember. Produced by Spielberg and written by Columbus, *Gremlins* is the best Christmas movie ever, for those of us who have had less jolly experiences. Forty years old now, it's better than ever, with a completely effective and highly entertaining blend of cute comedy and violent horror, action adventure and teen romance, snow and fire. Right beneath the surface, there are wildly varying themes like animal testing, bullying and a love for classic cinema: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Forbidden Planet*, shameless *E.T.*, plus many more easter eggs. The one truest irresistible charm however, is Phoebe Cates and her sudden sad drama. Turtleneck sweaters over bikinis any day, if you know you know.

*Gremlins* was the first movie i ever rented, right after my parents had wisely treated our household to a VCR, not realizing the lifelong passion which would be triggered. The tape turned out to be a German dubbed version, precious memory funny as hell.

'look mama, see daddy, i wrote you a poem on my wrists..'



## 91. Surviving (1985, Waris Hussein)

Too serious for the mainstream, too mainstream for the serious, but it feels very real; suicide, in all its sadness, right in the heart of the eighties. It's a long, beyond heavy tv film, which is probably why it's so ridiculously unknown. Cuts, fades to black that are obviously made for commercials contrast heavily with the subject material, plus a change of perspective half way through, this is no easy matinee viewing. And there is the way of acting, which is different on tv (or on stage) than if it's meant for cinemas. Just a random thought: we've all had our moments of real life behavior that would be considered 'bad acting' in the movies. Keep an open mind and don't slit your wrists.

Romeo & Juliet extended version, including aftermath, has an almost unbearable mid-section, when their bodies are found. Lonnie (Molly Ringwald) has a long history of useless therapy, Rick (Zach Galligan) finds out his dad is cheating on his mom, school sucks. End of story, but it's just the beginning for their parents, flawed but not evil, blaming each other then blaming themselves, for what was supposed to be 'just a phase'.



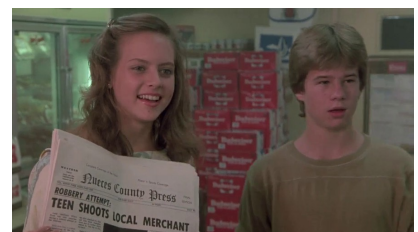
The cast is incredible: two of the hottest eighties stars, plus two veteran pairs of parents, ultimately this film belongs to Ellen Burstyn. Shivers come however seeing River Phoenix (one year before *Stand By Me*) and Heather O'Rourke (the little girl in *Poltergeist*) as her children. They both would be dead soon, Burstyn is still very much alive today. Childhood pictures of the main actors in the opening credits only add to this weird, sad realization how fragile and unfair this life is.

Despite all the big names, *Surviving* was hard to find for a very, very long time, i had to order it on expensive imported VHS. Soon after, of course someone uploaded it.

'you should take a day and go to the lake and just lie in the sun..'



Exceptional honorable mention goes to an actress you've never heard of: **Kim Valentine** stars in my Top 100 with her first two films! I developed a crush on her like any teenage boy would through entertaining eighties horror *Grandmother's House* (1988,



Peter Rader) and did not think of her for thirty years. Creating lists like this brings up all these fun facts, personal trivia. Kim is blink-and-miss-her, find her at #71 as well.



## 90. The Egg and I

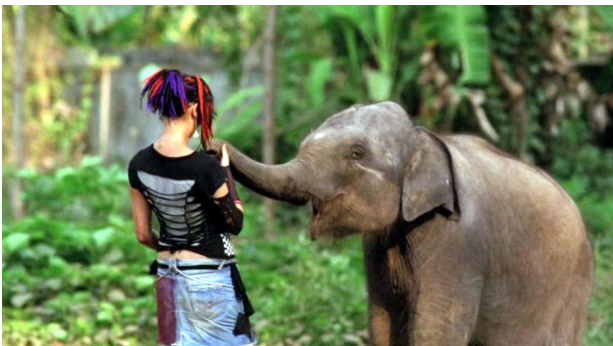
(1947, Chester Erskine)

Clumsy husband Bob buys a chicken farm and drags his clumsy wife Betty along. The house is not in the best shape, but he remains optimistic. Many locals visit, some friendlier and more helpful than others. A too sweet guard dog, a pig called Cleopatra and many other animals contribute to the desired result of home sweet home: *Ik Vertrek avant la lettre*.

The first half of this film is slapstick: opening credits with farm sounds set the initial tone. A peculiar turn of events lead to this remarkably serious second act, in which she gets really, really jealous and the marriage is threatened. Fear of infidelity, business not taking off as hoped, forest fire and a touching sense of community: *The Egg and I* is probably too heavy for comedy lovers, too light for those that prefer drama. Awkward dancing sums it up nicely.



Claudette Colbert and Fred MacMurray star, but the lovely lone Oscar nomination was for Marjorie Main playing a scene chewing, quilt competition winning, country woman with a house full of kids that she can't keep apart. It's a fun character in a fun movie.



## 89. Zoop in India

(2006, Johan Nijenhuis)

Appeltaart! Our favorite rangers are back for their second full-length film, after *Afrika*, before *Zuid-Amerika*, and in sequel quality it truly outshines *The Empire Strikes Back*. All kinds of Indian things are explained, they are just as stereotypical and completely silly as their Dutch counterparts: don't take yourself, or anything for that matter, too seriously. There are life lessons for the scientist, the punk, the pink and all the others. These kids played by adults are split into two groups of four: one heads to the jungle to rescue some elephants, the other visits Bombay to trace the bad guys led by an evil Bollywood star who speaks ridiculous Dutch. Trivia: that's the voice of Tygo Gernandt.

**'schop 'm in z'n bek!'**

In the mid-2000s, a soap in a zoo was insanely popular in Holland, Madame Tussauds level fame. Three seasons of *Zoop* were produced and all main actors are well-known to this very day, having moved into wildly different directions. Monique van der Werff, colorful emo Taffie, stole my heart and an award. I will never forget our lengthy talk about depression, after a stage play she produced. She wisely quit acting soon after.



## 88. Charulata

(1964, Satyajit Ray)

Set in Calcutta, 1879, based on *The Broken Nest* (*Nastanirh*) by Rabindranath Tagore, *Charulata* is a touching story of the clash between intellect and emotions, showing a politically involved husband caring for, but not understanding his artistic wife. She watches him through binoculars, he invites a family member over to save her from loneliness. A well-meant initiative backfires, she falls in love.

Directed by renowned director Ray, mostly known for his Apu Trilogy, hypnotic cinematography creates numerous unforgettable scenes: an embroidering opening, swingin' in the garden and that chilling freeze frame at the end. Meanwhile, the meaning of marriage and importance of shared passion is seen through the eyes of phenomenal actress Madhabi Mukherjee, 82 now and slowing down. Historical portrayal, British occupation takes a backseat, but a dream of visiting London is mentioned, in Bengali.



## 87. Touki Bouki

(1973, Djibril Diop Mambéty)

A dream of visiting Paris is mentioned, in Wolof, over and over over again; associated song *Paris, Paris, Paris* will never leave your head. Senegal slums and Dakar harbor are the main settings of this peculiar road movie, obviously influenced by *Easy Rider* and *Bonnie & Clyde*, endorsed by all #celebritiesmatter, from Scorsese to Beyoncé.

*The Journey of the Hyena* comes with a warning: while frivolous comedy is a welcome approach to the obvious doom and gloom of people trying to flee their country, right from the beginning an uncensored slaughterhouse makes for uncomfortable contrast. French colonialism however, the huge gap between rich and poor, struggle for money, causes even more increasingly surrealistic situations. Unheimlich and funny, adventurous, erotic, violent and gay, poetic *Touki Bouki* really is a wild one.



**'once you overcome the 1-inch-tall barrier of subtitles,  
you will be introduced to so many more amazing films..'**

(Bong Joon Ho, after *Parasite* won a Golden Globe)

Diversity doesn't come naturally, people simply suck way too much for that. Say what you want about Hollywood and yes, aggressive wokeism is a problem for progression, but at least they're trying. Just like i am trying every year to leave my comfort zones for a while, to watch uncomfortable cinema long enough to finally understand appeal. I am a heterosexual white male. And i love that fact that the world of popular cinema is getting less and less dominantly heterosexual white male. Still, Spike Lee is not on my list, *Parasite* is not my list. Use the force to not be forced, but expand horizons.

'one minute she dissing me, giving me a hard time,  
next minute she showing me things i ain't never seen before..'



## 86. Jason's Lyric

(1994, Doug McHenry)

A dream of leaving Houston is mentioned, that's why Lyric, fed up with the violence, tells well-meaning Jason, son of a Vietnam vet (Forest Whitaker, shown in flashback), to walk away. They both have extremely 'troubled' brothers, who can't and won't be saved. Romance is tender, but hood nonsense always looms; family loyalty has limits.

*Jason's Lyric*, besides having one of the most beautiful film titles ever, is a classic love story with an absolutely devastating finale. All in all though, way more time is spent on sweetness than on gangsta shit and that's what sets this barely noticed nineties gem apart from all its more male oriented counterparts. It's a movie for those that see loved ones spiraling down.



Jada Pinkett is a joy, Allen Payne's career should have taken off properly, but the show gets stolen by Bokeem Woodbine as terrifyingly hopeless, alcoholic Josh. Between the blues, soul, gospel, hip-hop, ballads, a great soundtrack, his world is gonna explode.



## 85. Hiroshima Mon Amour

(1959, Alain Resnais)

Two vastly different, somehow comparable traumatic experiences meet for a brief moment in time: French actress and Japanese architect, both happily married. Comparing failed relationships with atomic bombing seems inappropriate, until her actual background is explained, through flashbacks that may be memory.

I always seem to forget large parts of this legendary masterpiece, which makes sense, being about things that can't ever be forgotten. This way, it continues to linger in the back of the head even more, as a tragic mystery, a classic reminder that love is an explosion. She ('Elle') is Nevers, he ('Lui') is Hiroshima.

If you have visited every museum, read every book, do you know anything? It's all appropriately vague.





## 84. Come and See

(*Idi i smotri*, 1985, Elem Klimov)

Belarus 1943, kids playing. Opening credits, German national anthem. The rest is hell. The amount of unbearable imagery in this horrifying war film about young 'partisans', is absolutely stunning. This includes deafening explosions and crawling through mud, that's just the beginning. Mass murder by fire, suggested rape and the sound of flies seem to contrast with beautiful full frontal laughing and crying, but they're all part of the insanity. In just a short period of history, Flyora and Glasha seem to age decades. *Idi i smotri*, initial title *Kill Hitler*, was Klimov's last film and can't ever be unseen.



## 83. Moscow Zero

(2006, María Lidón)

The gates of hell are rumored to be opened up deep down below, in the catacombs. An American priest goes down into the tunnels to find a missing friend. Guided by a local group, the entrance may be closed behind them, children and demons roam. Don't expect horror, don't expect arthouse, don't expect to understand. *Moscow Zero* is a niche market picture, starring primary colors and an incredible international cast: Vincent Gallo, Oksana Akinshina (the girl in *Lilya 4-Ever*), Joaquim de Almeida, Rade Šerbedžija, Val Kilmer and Sage Stallone wander a dreamlike, gothic, bilingual maze. Highly intriguing, completely original Spanish poet María Lidón hasn't directed since.

'according to legend, we live on the threshold of hell..'



## 82. WarGames

(1983, John Badham)

During the Cold War, Matthew Broderick hacks the government without realizing how much danger it causes. A cynical old man who wouldn't mind the end of the world, teaches him real life tic-tac-toe.

World war meets teenage love, what's not to like! Remember, back in the 80s not everyone and their mom were online; the idea of an actual girl in your nerdy room, honestly interested in computer stuff, flirting while at it, was way ahead of its time. And so, even if her role is relatively minor, Ally Sheedy became the dream of Generation Matrix Printers.

Don't believe everything you see on a screen; the early message clearly hasn't sunk in very well yet. Resonating on multiple levels until this day, still it never gets heavy: American-Russian tensions, the threat of global nuclear war, fear of getting hacked and risk of incarceration, handled with eighties joy.

*WarGames* is a silly film but not comedy, a serious film but not intellectual, a romantic film just a crush. Twitch gamer girl, while soaking up community attention streaming shooters, feel free to think of nostalgic old me. The only winning move is not to play.

## 81. Adventures in Babysitting

(1987, Chris Columbus)

Known as *A Night on the Town* back then, this was the first film i ever copied. I had this feeling that if you hooked up a rental 'movie box' to your video recorder, it should work, and it did! *Adventures in Babysitting* topped my wishlist. Real time copying, be kind rewind, countless visits to all video stores in a wide area on my bicycle in the rain; how could i have suspected that 30 years later you'd be able to fit ALL eighties movies ever made, downloaded, onto ONE hard drive. Where do we go from here?

Into the big city, that's where we'll go. After being lied to by her shitty boyfriend, Chris decides to go babysitting instead and one thing leads to another: a guy with a hook who turns out to be nice, a thief who turns out to be nice, a (babysitting) blues club filled with nice people, a frat party with at least one nice guy, and last but not least, Vincent D'Onofrio as car mechanic a.k.a. Thor, Gay God of Thunder.

From the dancing around to *Then He Kissed Me* in the opening scene, not a clue what chaos the day has in store, to a kiss with the very same song before end credits roll, Elisabeth Shue shines. She is sixty years old now and that brings an unexpected tear to my eye. Never forget why you started watching movies in the first place. For FUN.



*next week, April 14th:*  
#80-71!

*featuring:*

- Malaysia and Lithuania
- dogs, waves and rebels
- Claudette Colbert again