

Nick Davis  
Film Discussion Group  
Quarantine Bonus

## Comfort Movies for Quarantine (OMG What a Crazy Time, 2020)

[\*It Happened One Night\*](#) (1934) – The first comedy to win Best Picture, as well as Actress, Actor, Director, *and* Screenplay. Still a total pip, about a runaway heiress (Claudette Colbert) and the rascalion reporter (Clark Gable) she meets on a bus. The stars hated it; everyone else loves it!

[\*Holiday\*](#) (1938) – Katharine Hepburn was the hero of my youth. This is one of my favorites of her movies, and one of the best Cary Grant performances, as a fellow who refuses to adopt the money-minded priorities of his rich fiancée's family. Same year they made *Bringing Up Baby*.

[\*The Lady Eve\*](#) (1941) – Henry Fonda and Barbara Stanwyck weren't principally known for comedy but this Preston Sturges farce suggests they should have made more! She's a con artist who seduces him on a cruise ship for his money, back when cruises were still fun to think about.

[\*Holiday Inn\*](#) (1942) – Because this Fred Astaire–Bing Crosby classic covers a whole year's worth of special occasions, it is *always* the right time to pop it in! Or to stream it for free on Amazon Prime. If you haven't seen Fred tap-dance while setting off firecrackers beneath his shoes...

[\*Adam's Rib\*](#) (1949) – I'm more a Hepburn/Grant than a Hepburn/Tracy person, but this is the most delicious film from the more famous pair. They're married lawyers on opposing sides of a case about a woman (*Born Yesterday's* delightful Judy Holliday) who tried to shoot her husband.

[\*Singin' in the Rain\*](#) (1952) – I'm not even a musicals devotee, but who can resist this one? Why would they?? Gene Kelly falls in love with Debbie Reynolds, who's paid to provide the voice for a horrifically off-pitch movie star. Donald O'Connor and Jean Hagen in hilarious support.

[\*The Young Girls of Rochefort\*](#) (1967) – French director Jacques Demy so loved U.S. musicals that he tried to make a few. This exuberant one stars Catherine Deneuve and her actual twin sister as a traveling cabaret act looking for love in a seaside city. Features a Gene Kelly cameo!

[\*Claudine\*](#) (1974) – Not currently streaming anywhere, and why not?? Diahann Carroll earned an Oscar nomination as a single mother of six in Harlem who ambivalently falls in love with the garbage collector—a rare romantic lead for James Earl Jones. This gal doesn't pull punches.

[\*Sherman's March\*](#) (1985) – Documentary by a middle-aged, Eeyore-ish director whose girlfriend dumps him, just as he's leaving to go make a grant-funded movie about the Civil War. He tries to make that movie but keeps getting distracted by the kooky, fascinating women of the South.

[\*Aliens\*](#) (1986) – Look, either it floats your boat to watch Sigourney Weaver vanquish all the acid-blooded aliens that have taken over a U.S. space colony in the future *and* proves to all the men in a Marine unit that she's better at this than they are...or, it doesn't. One of my all-time faves.

[\*When Harry Met Sally...\*](#) (1989) – Basically a religious text in my household. There is no situation that a line from Nora Ephron's perfect script cannot explain, or lighten up. Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan are *perfect* as flawed NYC transplants who take 11 years to realize they're a match.

*Are there more? Why, yes, there are...*

[Postcards from the Edge](#) (1990) – Remember how people doubted Meryl when she first started to do comedies? This one, based on Carrie Fisher’s memoir, remains my favorite. The chemistry between mother-daughter Streep and MacLaine couldn’t be better. Zingy script. And songs!

[Babe](#) (1995) – Did all my college friends judge me for continually going back to see the talking-pig movie yet again? Yes, they did. When I bullied them into coming along, did they wind up thanking me afterward? YES, THEY DID. This sweet-souled pig has got all of life figured out.

[Walking and Talking](#) (1996) – Catherine Keener and Anne Heche are best friends, but when one gets engaged, and the other can’t help feeling lonely and jealous, things get bumpier. The same director made *Lovely & Amazing*, *Enough Said*, and other good dramedies. This is my favorite.

[Children of Heaven](#) (1997) – You might not associate Iran with heartwarming kids’ movies, but this one’s a keeper. A young brother and sister can’t admit to their poor parents that they lost a pair of shoes, so they have to share the boy’s sneaks until they work out a scheme to get more.

[Hands on a Hardbody](#) (1997) – A Texas dealership decided to do a promo contest where a new, free truck would go to the person who could endure hours or even days of keeping their hands on the vehicle without breaking. This documentary is a delight, and it gets really suspenseful!

[Shakespeare in Love](#) (1998) – I cannot believe that somebody came up with the 1,001 great lines in this script. So many smart in-jokes, too, about Shakespeare and his contemporary playwrights. Also a joyous romantic comedy with the speed and exquisite supporting cast of a 1940s movie.

[Cookie’s Fortune](#) (1999) – Part murder mystery, part slapstick comedy, this loopy Southern yarn involves a clash over a will, a warden who hangs out with his prisoners in their cells, and a truly awful church production of *Salome*. Glenn Close, Julianne Moore, Chris O’Donnell...

[A Walk on the Moon](#) (1999) – Summer 1969. If a man can land on the moon, why can’t a young Jewish wife and mom (Diane Lane) try something new, besides the same upstate NY resort, every year? How about a fling with Viggo Mortensen? Compassionate, well-acted dramedy.

[Best in Show](#) (2000) – You can never go too wrong with Christopher Guest’s repertory of brilliant improvisers (Catherine O’Hara, Jane Lynch, Eugene Levy, etc.), and all his movies are fun, but this mockumentary send-up of the Westminster Dog Show is the one I always come back to.

[Erin Brockovich](#) (2000) – I could watch this movie every day. I love Julia Roberts in it, and her chemistry with Albert Finney. I love the snappy filmmaking and the true tale of David beating Goliath. I love the Aaron Eckhart character, but also that Erin’s greatest pride is her work.

[Junebug](#) (2005) – A Chicago art dealer heads to North Carolina to meet her new husband’s family. This isn’t quite a comedy, and a few sad things happen in it, but it features Amy Adams in her jubilant, star-making role, and I just loved the tribute to the colorful eccentricity of families.

[The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters](#) (2007) – Uproarious documentary, intentionally and not, about the competition to beat the classic, almost unwinnable arcade game Donkey Kong. These guys...take this really seriously. One of them especially. Everyone I show this to adores it.

[Whip It](#) (2009) – When I heard Drew Barrymore was making her directing debut with a comedy about a Texas girl (*Juno*’s Ellen Page) secretly taking up roller derby despite the wishes of her mother (Marcia Gay Harden, wonderful), I was skeptical. *I was wrong*. Warm and hilarious.