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Harriet Quimby

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Harriet Quimby

Nur wenige Monate nachdem Harriet Quimby als erste Frau in den USA ihre Pilotenlizenz erhalten hatte, überflog sie 1912 den Ärmelkanal – ein Flug, den vor ihr nur Männer gewagt hatten.

Of all the early women fliers, few *draw* us quite the way Harriet Quimby does. Quimby's *stunning* beauty is central to her story, but not in the way we first might think. For beauty is a created quality. That was certainly true in her case.

She was born on a Michigan farm in 1875. The Quimby family moved to San Francisco during Harriet's early teens. She wanted to become an *actress*, and, indeed, she's listed as one in the 1900 *census*. Did Harriet Quimby ever do any theatre? If she did, we have no record of it. Instead, she began writing for various magazines. In 1903 she went to New York and found work with Leslie's Illustrated Weekly. She eventually became a full-time photojournalist.

Her writing leaned toward *excitement* – travel, theatre, race cars, flight. In 1906, after a ride on an automobile racetrack, she bought her own car. That's not impressive until you realize how primitive autos were, and what a "guy thing" driving was. In 1910, she *covered* a so-called International Aviation Tournament. Flight had only just found its way into the American *consciousness*, and airplanes were still *antediluvian*. By now, Quimby was a close friend to both John and Matilde Moisant. John Moisant ran a flying school, and he produced his own *monoplane*. Harriet and Matilde *enrolled* in the school. Quimby was the first American woman to be licensed as a flyer; Matilde soon followed. A few other women had flown, but none were *licensed*. John died in an accident a few months later, but Harriet and Matilde went right on flying. Harriet had her stage. She created a *trademark purple* flying costume – a satin jacket with a soft *cowl* around her head, high *laced* boots and satin riding pants.

Tall and elegant, she was *unmistakable* at a distance. And close-up photos show an *ethereal* face with dark eyes looking out from the shadows of that cowl. She seemed to be of another world. She was also an instant hit on the *barnstorming* circuit, and her articles about flying carried her popularity to a larger public.

That spring she went to England to buy a Bleriot airplane. She borrowed one in Dover, and, early on the morning of April 16th, 1912, she took off and became the first woman to fly

the English Channel. But fate got in her way. Hours earlier the world learned about Titanic's sinking, and Quimby was wiped from the headlines.

So it was back to America and more barnstorming. On July 1st, she was paid *handsomely* to do an air show near Boston. In front of everyone, her plane *lurched*, throwing her passenger to his death. Quimby *struggled* to regain control; then she too was thrown out. The empty airplane glided in, landed, and *flipped over* in the *mud*. So ended a meteoric life: Harriet Quimby had flown less than a year, but she'd written history while she did. And she had, in a way, become the actress she'd always wanted to be. Now her purple-cowled ghost stands alongside Lilienthal, Earhart, and all the rest who died pointing our way into the sky.

Prof. Dr. John Lienhard, University of Houston

	<i>superbly</i>
<i>attract</i>	
<i>extraordinary</i>	<i>rolled</i>
	<i>fought</i>
	<i>toppled</i>
	<i>dirt</i>
<i>mime</i>	
<i>*see list</i>	
<i>thrill</i>	
<i>reported on</i>	
<i>Fkight Competition</i>	
<i>*see list</i>	
<i>*see list</i>	
<i>*see list</i>	
<i>registered</i>	
<i>certified</i>	
<i>characteristic</i>	
<i>violet</i>	
<i>hood ... fastened</i>	
<i>unmissable</i>	
<i>delicate</i>	
<i>*see list</i>	

<i>actress</i>	Schauspielerin
<i>antediluvian</i>	vorsintflutlich
<i>aviation</i>	Luftfahrt, Flugsport
<i>barnstorming</i>	Flugzirkus
<i>census</i>	Volkszählung
<i>consciousness</i>	Bewusstsein
<i>cover, to</i>	berichten, behandeln
<i>cowl</i>	Kapuze, Haube
<i>draw so., to (drew, drawn)</i>	jmd. anziehen
<i>enrol, to</i>	sich anmelden
<i>ethereal</i>	himmlisch
<i>excitement</i>	Aufregung
<i>flip over, to</i>	sich überschlagen
<i>handsomely</i>	stattlich, ansehnlich
<i>lace, to</i>	schnüren
<i>license, to</i>	zulassen, genehmigen
<i>lurch, to</i>	torkeln, taumeln
<i>monoplane</i>	Eindecker
<i>mud</i>	Schlamm
<i>purple</i>	violett
<i>struggle, to</i>	kämpfen
<i>stunning</i>	umwerfend, atemberaubend
<i>tournament</i>	Turnier, Wettkampf
<i>trademark</i>	Markenzeichen
<i>unmistakable</i>	unverwechselbar

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