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# In a Lonely Place

By Andrew Solt

Dix Steele! How are you?

- Don't you remember me?

- No, I'm sorry. I can't say that I do.

You wrote the last picture I did  
at Columbia.

I never see pictures I write.

You. Stop bothering my wife!

You shouldn't have done it. No matter  
how much money that pig's got.

- Pull over!

- What's wrong with right here?

- Evening, Mr. Steele.

- Hi, Dave.

- I'll put her right up front.

- Okay.

- Can I have your autograph?

- Who am I?

- I don't know.

- Don't bother, he's nobody.

She's right.

Dix! We'd about given you up.

- Hi, Mel.

- Where've you been?

- Come on. Buy us a drink.

- He's somebody.

Lloyd Barnes, big director. Made all  
his money before the income tax.

- We've been calling for three days.

- You know me...

...if I don't answer the third ring,  
I'm not home.

- Hello, Dix. Lloyd.

- Hi, Max.

Honey, let me have that book I left  
here for Mr. Steele.

I'm almost finished.

Say " I like it, " and you go on  
salary tomorrow.

Then I like it.

I think it'll make a dreamy picture.

An epic.

- What do you call an epic?

- A picture that's real long...

- ...and has lots of things going on.

- Could we have some matches?  
Here you are. Mr. Steele, could I keep  
the book till you come out?  
I only have a few pages to go.  
- Sure, take your time.  
- Thanks.  
- Good evening, Mr. Steele.  
- Evening.  
- Remember, she's your audience.  
- Say that again...  
...I'll get another agent.  
How are you, Charlie?  
- Let's sit at the other end.  
- What's wrong with right here?  
- How are you, noble prince?  
- Right well, thespian. Greg?  
Gin and tonic.  
What do you fellows want?  
- A stinger.  
- Glass of milk.  
And a brandy for Mr. Waterman.  
- Are you dining here or browsing?  
- How's everything, Paul?  
Just like show business,  
there is no business. Ex cuse me.  
- Who's producing this?  
- Bert Brody. Lloyd's directing.  
You've got to work. You've  
been out of circulation too long.  
I need money,  
you need the 10 percent.  
For me, you don't have to go to work.  
I've got my apartment, car, ulcers.  
- Gasoline doesn't cost much.  
- I won't do something I don't like.  
- Dix, how many times must I tell you--?  
- It's just another picture.  
Can you really be choosy? You haven't  
had a hit since before the war.  
Everybody makes flops ex cept you.  
You've remade the same picture...  
...for 20 years.  
You're a popcorn salesman.  
That's right. So are you.

The difference is, I don't fight it.

- One day I'll write something good.

- Althea Bruce will do it.

- Althea Bruce--

- You just have to follow the book.

- Remind me to buy you a new tie.

- Hi, kiddies!

What a picture I made!

Just back from the preview.

- Pasadena's out of its mind about it.

- Hello, Junior.

- No one walked out!

- Don't you shake hands with an actor?

You call this an actor?

He hasn't remembered a line

for 10 years.

Made your father- in- law

a couple of million.

- Pop made a star out of a drunkard.

- That is a menace.

Movie idol of the Roaring '20s.

Look at him.

Gazing into his crystal ball!

You have set the son- in- law business

back 50 years.

- That's a dirty thing to-

- Stop! Hey, stop, Dix!

What's the matter with you?

Quiet down!

There goes Dix again.

- I'm leaving.

- Mel, take Charlie home, will you?

Come on.

Maybe I'd better stay.

No.

- You will read that book tonight?

- Yes, yes.

I'll drop by and wake you up in

the morning. Around 10.

Make it about 11 .

He had it coming, but next time will

you please do it in the parking lot?

- I'll have some ham and eggs.

- I shall select the eggs personally.

Sit here and take it easy.

Dix on Steele!

- Hello, Fran. How are you?

- Between pictures.

Last night I couldn't sleep.

So, what did I do?

- Called up a lot of people.

- Just you. Where were you?

- Home.

- Don't you like to talk anymore?

- Not to people who have my number.

- Why don't you come over?

- I've got to read a book.

- Remember how I used to read to you?

Since then, I've learned to read  
by myself.

That's all. Do you look down on all  
women or just the ones you know?

I was pretty nice to you.

No, not to me. But you were  
pretty nice. I'll call you.

Thanks for letting me read it.

- What's your name?

- Mildred. Mildred Atkinson.

- Where do you live?

- In Inglewood, with my aunt.

- You got a car?

- No, I usually catch the bus.

- I'll drive you home.

- Thank you, but I have a date.

- Well, break it.

- I can't.

Besides, it's my policy  
never to go out with customers.

I didn't mean I was  
going to take you out.

- I was going to take you home.

- I have a date.

My home.

Mr. Steele.

You can help me. I've gotta read  
this book tonight and I'm tired.

- Maybe you could tell it to me.

- Is that what you had in mind?

You make me feel real important.  
Just think. When I go to see  
Alathea Bruce with Aunt Cora...  
...I can say I told the story to the  
screenwriter. Let me call my date.  
Maybe I can still  
catch him at home.  
There's no sacrifice too great  
for a chance at immortality.  
Yes, sir.  
My, what a pretty place!  
Sort of hacienda- like.  
Ex cuse me.  
Neighbour of yours?  
No, I never saw her before.  
I'll be right with you.  
Make yourself at home.  
It must be wonderful to be a writer.  
Thrilling.  
- Make yourself a drink.  
- I don't drink.  
Before I worked at Paul's, I used to  
think actors made up their own lines.  
When they get to be big stars  
they usually do.  
What? Change your mind?  
You asked me here to tell you  
the story of Alathea Bruce.  
Althea.  
If that was just a pretence  
to lure me--  
- You want to go now?  
- Well, no. Not unless--  
I changed because I like to be  
comfortable when I work.  
Oh. Well.  
I'll have a ginger ale with a twist of  
lemon. That's known as a horse's neck.  
- How do you want me to tell the story?  
- Just how you'd tell your Aunt Cora.  
Well, it's about this woman,  
Alathea Bruce. She's very rich.  
She owns this big mansion  
on Long Island.

She's got sailboats and cars and jewels  
and everything. And she's a widow.

Lucky Althea.

She's got many men in her life, and they  
take her to lots of different clubs.

- But they don't send Alatheia.

- Althea.

One day she looks out and sees  
a new lifeguard outside her window...  
...and it's very beautifully described.

He looks like a bronzed Apollo.

- I hope it's gonna be in Technicolor.

- I'll suggest that to the producer.

Alatheia sends her butler to ask  
the lifeguard to have breakfast.

But instead, they have whiskey sours.

It's a very risky scene.

- Did I tell you about her husband?

- You told me he was dead.

I mean about the way he died.

He fell out of a boat while sailing,  
and there's an investigation going on.

Did she kill him?

That's kind of left open.

She falls in love with Channing...

...who's not really a lifeguard but is  
studying to be a bacteriologist.

You know, they look into the microbes.

She tells him she didn't do it.

- Who didn't do what?

- Kill Lester!

Lester's her husband, I presume?

- Are you sure you haven't read it?

- No, and I don't think I'm going to.

Go ahead.

Then come the dreamy weeks.

Go on. I can hear you.

They're always together.

She wants him to marry her,  
but what Channing's after is bacteria.

Bacteriologist.

She throws herself into  
her lawyer's arms....

All you have to do is

follow the book.  
--and that does the trick.  
He won't speak to her.  
She tries everything,  
and I do mean everything.  
Then she gets desperate.  
She wants him so terribly...  
...and since there's no other way,  
one stormy day she swims way out...  
...and she starts to scream:  
" Help, help, help, help!"  
Honey, I have neighbours!  
Channing won't swim after her  
because he thinks it's a trick.  
Alathea goes on screaming, and suddenly  
he realizes she's in danger.  
He swims out so fast  
he hardly even touches the water.  
But by the time he gets there,  
she's gone.  
She's joined her husband  
Lester in the sea.  
- It's a powerful story.  
- What you call an epic.  
What did I tell you?  
There are lots of things  
I didn't even mention.  
Thank you.  
- What time is it?

**- It's 12:**

Oh, is that all?  
I'm sorry I acted so stupid. About you  
taking off your shoes and all.  
- It was nice of you to break your date.  
- I can see Henry anytime.  
Is Henry...? Is he in love with you?  
I guess so. He's nice and substantial.  
The easy-going type.  
He lives with his folks  
and has a good job.  
- So you don't love him.  
- Are you a mind reader?  
Most writers like to think they are.



Are you going steady with anybody?  
You don't have to say. I just wondered.  
Look, Mildred, it's late and I'm tired  
and I have to get up early.  
Well, that's all right.  
Would you mind  
if I don't drive you home?  
There's a taxi stand  
right around the corner.  
Not at all. That'll be fine.  
All right. Here you are  
and thank you very much.  
Well, thank you.  
- Good night, Mildred. And thanks a lot.  
- Likewise, I'm sure.  
- Brub! Hey, what's the idea?  
- Hi, Dix.  
- Do you know what time it is?

**- About 5:**

Don't cops sleep?  
Get out of here.  
That an order, major?  
You make me homesick for some  
of the worst years of our lives.  
- Have you been drinking?  
- No. Have you?  
No. No, I've been asleep for hours.  
With your clothes on?  
What is this?  
Hey, where's your uniform?  
You in trouble, Brub?  
Yeah, they made a mistake  
and promoted me to detective.  
- That's good, I guess.  
- It's not a social call, Dix.  
I get it. That blabbermouth Junior  
filed a complaint.  
That son- in- law....  
Just because I pushed him around.  
I'll get you a punching bag  
for Christmas. Get dressed.  
- Capt. Lochner wants to talk to you.  
- I'm sorry I didn't really beat him up.

- It's got nothing to do with Junior.

- Then what is it?

My boss will tell you.

- You wanna make yourself coffee?

- No, thanks.

- You know, I got married.

- Why?

She had a couple bucks

to spare.

Besides, I like her.

You will too, when you meet her.

Here, you read any good books lately?

- I guess you were asleep, at that.

- Is that a felony in Beverly Hills?

Wouldn't taking a checkroom girl home  
to hear a story be an odd thing to do?

I'd say it was very practical.

She'd read the book and I hadn't.

If you only wanted a story,  
why'd you take her to your place?

I work at home.

You had no other reason?

- If so, I didn't do anything about it.

- Did she have a drink at your house?

She had a glass of ginger ale  
with a twist of lemon in it.

It's known as a horse's neck.

The glass is still on my desk...

...complete with fingerprints.

I was too tired to wash dishes.

You gave her 20 dollars.

Quite a large sum for cab fare.

- Well, she'd given me valuable service.

- Was it two 10s?

Yes, but don't ask me  
to identify the bills.

Why didn't you call for a cab? Isn't  
that what a gentleman usually does?

I didn't say I was a gentleman.

I said I was tired.

You're told the girl you were with  
last night was found murdered...

...dumped from a moving car.

What's your reaction?

Shock, horror, sympathy?

No, just petulance

at being questioned...

...a couple of feeble jokes.

You puzzle me, Mr. Steele.

The jokes could have been better, but

I don't see why the rest worries you.

Unless you plan to arrest me

for lack of emotion.

- What else did she say about her date?

- No more than I've told you.

- Some more coming.

- Any marks on the neck?

Dr. Jackson said the killer

used his arm, not his hands.

How you fellows recording this?

Tape or wire?

Tape.

Here's the mike.

- How long have you known Mr. Steele?

- He was my C.O. Three years overseas.

- See each other much? After the war?

- About a year ago I called him.

He promised to call back.

I'm still waiting.

When I found out he was a cop,

I lost interest.

Send the parking attendant and the

other checkroom girl home.

- Wanna see some pictures?

- I don't mind.

It'd help us if it could be

established that she left...

...of her own volition and you spent

the rest of the night at home.

Did anybody drop in or call you?

No, nobody called.

Poor kid.

Nobody dropped in.

Phone rang once but I didn't answer it.

- You just let it ring?

- I often do. You can ask my neighbours.

Hey, wait a minute....

Miss Gray.

Good morning, Miss Gray.

Please sit down.

I'm Capt. Lochner.

This is Sgt. Nicolai.

- Hello.

- How do you do?

I'm sorry. No more coffee.

Miss Gray, do you know this gentleman?

No.

- Did you ever see him before?

- Yes, a few times.

Where?

The Patio Apartments.

We both live there.

Do you know who he is?

Yes. When I moved in a few days ago,

Mr. Steele was pointed out to me...

...by the manager. She's very proud  
of having a celebrity tenant.

- Did you see Mr. Steele last night?

- As I came home...

...I saw him go into his apartment  
with a girl.

That girl was Mildred Atkinson.

She was murdered between

- Murdered?

- Yes. Strangled...

- ...by the vice- like grip of an arm.

- You know. Mugged.

What time did you get home  
last night?

Shortly after midnight.

Did you see Mr. Steele after  
he and the girl entered his apartment?

Yes, about a half an hour later.

I saw him at his door  
saying good night.

- How do you know it was a half- hour?

- It takes me that long...

- ...to get ready for bed.

- Can you see his door from your room?

She was standing on her balcony  
in a negligee.

It was warm.

My apartment was stuffy.

- Sure he didn't leave with the girl?

- Positive.

- What was he doing?

- He was looking at me.

For never meeting Mr. Steele,  
you've paid good attention to him.

I have, at that.

- Usually pay attention to neighbours?

- No.

Were you interested  
because he's a celebrity?

Not at all. I noticed him  
because he looked interesting.

I like his face.

I guess that will be all for now.

Goodbye, Miss Gray.

Goodbye, Capt. Lochner.

Oh, Barton?

Do attractive young women  
often admire your face, Mr. Steele?  
If they do, they aren't usually as  
outspoken as Miss Gray. We finished?

Yes, for the time being.

Try to make it later next time.

Good luck. I'll call you, Brub.

No, I'll call you.

I'll see that Miss Gray gets home.

Thank you, but I always go home with  
the man who brought me.

- I'll drive you back too.

- No, thanks. I'll walk.

I haven't been up this early in years.  
How would you feel if you were brought  
in for questioning at 5:00 a.m.?

Not good.

How would you feel if you were told  
the girl you took home was murdered?

- I'd come apart at the seams.

- Yes, and people usually do.

Would you say Steele was  
especially perturbed?

It's hard to tell how Dix feels about  
anything. We never figured him out.

But he was a good officer  
and his men liked him.  
I like him too. I don't think  
he killed Mildred Atkinson.  
He's hiding something. I doubt if it's  
the proverbial heart of gold.  
- Say, do me a favour, will you, pal?  
- Yes, sir?  
I want to send two dozen white roses  
to a girl.  
- Yes, sir. Do you want to write a card?  
- No, there's no card.  
- The name's Mildred Atkinson.  
- Yes, sir. What's her address?  
I don't know.  
Look it up in the papers.  
She was murdered last night.  
Yes, sir.  
I shouldn't have left you last night.  
I knew something was going to happen.  
- You were in one of those moods.  
- Yeah, you look awful.  
- There's nothing wrong.  
- Nothing wrong?  
You should've heard

**the 7:**

" Checkroom Beauty Murdered...  
...Distinguished Screenwriter Takes  
Hatcheck Girl Home to Tell Him Story."  
- Dix!  
- Could have happened to anybody.  
But somehow  
it always happens to you.  
What did you tell the police?  
- You know a girl named Laurel Gray?  
- Dix, what did you tell the police?  
Let's make a deal. Look her up  
in the casting directory...  
...I'll tell you  
what I told the police.  
Laurel Gray? Oh, that's the girl that's  
been going around with Baker.  
- She lives across the patio.

- The real estate Baker.  
She also likes my face.  
She wants a part.  
I know a part she'd be good for.  
Call Brody and tell him  
I didn't read his book.  
What for? When he finds out what's  
happened he'll call it off anyway.  
Asking a checkroom girl  
to tell you the story.  
You couldn't have insulted him more.  
Tell him it was an excuse  
for the police.  
That's not bad.  
Oh, here she is. She's been  
in a couple low-budget pictures.  
Let me see.  
That checkroom girl left without you,  
didn't she? Tell me.  
Wonderful face.  
Tell me. What happened?  
Well, what do you think happened?  
Mildred Atkinson's glass.  
Don't do things like that!  
I don't think...  
...I just wanna know  
that you're in the clear.  
Mel, for now, I think I am.  
That's what Capt. Lochner said.  
Smart fellow.  
Couple times he almost had me.  
It was his story against mine.  
But of course I told my story better.  
Notes on Dix on Steele, continued:  
" February, 1946:  
Beer parlour brawl  
on Santa Monica Boulevard.  
Brought to station for questioning.  
Discharged with warning."

**Next number:**

" March, 1947.  
While working as screenwriter,  
had fistfight with his producer.

Fractured producer's jaw. Fired.  
No charges preferred."  
I was smart. I covered all the angles.  
I have an airtight alibi.  
Dix, if you had anything  
to do with it, tell me!  
- Why do you want me to confess?  
- I'll have to get you a lawyer...  
- ...maybe get you into Mexico.  
- Lippman and his connections!

**Next number:**

"June 22nd, 11 p.m.  
Frances Randolph screams for help.  
Charges Steele beat her up.  
Then denies having made the charge.  
Alleges nose broken  
by running into a door."  
He plays rough.  
So do I. What else have we got?  
Oh, come in.  
Mr. Lippman, my agent.  
Miss Gray, my alibi.  
- Hello.  
- Good morning.  
- He believes I killed Mildred Atkinson.  
- Stop it.  
- Want a cup of coffee?  
- No, thanks. I came to ask...  
...if you could keep my name out of  
the papers. You have connections?  
I don't, but Mel does.  
If you want to go to Mexico.  
Shut up.  
It's easier to get names into papers  
than to keep them out.  
You've kept mine out a few times.  
Go ahead, try.  
Well, I'll try,  
but I can't promise anything.  
Miss Gray, did you really see him  
after that girl left?  
- Of course I did.  
- Sometimes I wish I'd never met you.



But I'm very happy to have met you.

- The best straight man ever.

- You upset him.

When I told him I killed Mildred,  
he had me across the border.

- Very funny.

- No, it's not very funny.

Good thing you like my face.

I'd be in trouble without you.

I told the police what I saw.

I have no idea what you did  
after you closed your blinds.

You'd be surprised. I went to bed.

Perhaps I shouldn't have  
closed my blinds.

You're one up on me.

You can see into my apartment...

- ...but I can't see into yours.

- I promise not to take advantage of it.

If it were the other way around, I'd  
try to find out who you're hiding from.

Not hiding, avoiding.

It couldn't by any chance be  
the real estate Mr. Baker?

- Could be.

- Picked up your little marbles, I hope?

We were getting married.

It wouldn't have worked.

You sneaked out the back door,  
left no address.

That about covers it,  
only it was my back door.

You know, you're out of your mind.

How could anybody  
like a face like this?

- Look at it.

- I said I liked it...

...I didn't say I wanted to kiss it.

You're a quitter.

The "get out before you get hurt" type.

- Is that bad?

- You save yourself trouble that way.

I do. I think twice  
before I get into something.

- You're getting into something now.  
- No, I've only thought about it once.  
- Are you a fast thinker?  
- Not right now.  
I didn't get much sleep last night.  
A neighbour kept me awake.  
Well, sleep.  
We'll have dinner tonight.  
We'll have dinner tonight,  
but not together.  
When you walked into  
the police station, I said to myself:  
"There she is, the one that's different.  
She's not coy, or cute, or corny.  
She's a good guy.  
I'm glad she's on my side.  
She knows what she wants."  
Thank you, sir. But let me add...  
...I also know what I don't want,  
and I don't want to be rushed.  
When you've made up your mind,  
stop by. But not before noon.  
Thank you, I will.  
Your phone's ringing.  
Hello?  
Hello, Brub.  
I can imagine a reunion  
under better circumstances.  
I just talked to Sylvia.  
That's my wife.  
She wants you to come  
to dinner tomorrow night.  
That's swell. And she said  
to bring someone, if you like.  
Well, maybe I will. But I won't know  
till tomorrow, along about noon.  
Okay.  
Good.  
Why didn't he dump her  
- What difference does it make?  
- It'd be L.A.P.D.'s territory, not ours.  
We know she was dumped  
from a moving car.  
No clues, motives or suspects.

Present company ex cepted.  
What about Henry?  
Who? Kesler?  
Well, after she called him  
and broke a date, he went to bed.  
His mother brought him pie,  
his father heard him snore.  
First thing in the morning, he came  
to the station. He was upset.  
Substantial type,  
eats pie before going to sleep.  
You and Lochner don't see  
enough whodunits.  
We solve every murder  
in less than two hours.  
- You know who did it from the start.  
- Right.  
- You want me to help you?  
- I wish somebody would.  
You have to have enough imagination  
to visualize the crime. Here, get up.  
Put this chair here.  
This one here.  
Brub, you sit down there.  
Sylvia, you sit there on Brub's right.  
You're the killer. You're driving  
the car. This is the front seat.  
What makes you sure this murder  
was done in a car?  
If she was already dead,  
he'd have put her body in the back.  
In that case, he couldn't have  
dumped her without stopping.  
Now, you're driving up the canyon.  
Your left hand's on the wheel.  
Yeah, go ahead.  
She's telling you  
she'd done nothing wrong.  
You put your right arm  
around her neck.  
You get to a lonely place in the road,  
and you begin to squeeze.  
You're an ex- GI. You know judo. You can  
kill a person without using hands.

You're driving the car,  
and you're strangling her.  
You don't see her bulging eyes  
or protruding tongue.  
Go ahead, Brub, squeeze harder.  
You love her, and she's deceived you.  
You hate her.  
She looks down on you.  
She's impressed with celebrities.  
She wants to get rid of you. Squeeze.  
Harder.  
Squeeze harder.  
It's wonderful to feel her throat  
crush under your arm.  
- Brub, stop it!  
- I didn't hurt you, did I?  
No.  
Now, are you convinced?  
I think so.  
Well, I'm not.  
You forgot my hands. I could scratch  
his eyes out before he could kill me.  
But you didn't. Your instinct  
was to try to loosen his grip.  
That's where you lost,  
like Mildred did.  
- You've given this a lot of thought.  
- I've had a lot of experience in this.  
I've killed dozens of people,  
in pictures.  
No, I didn't do it.  
I could never throw a lovely body  
from a moving car.  
My artistic temperament  
wouldn't permit it.  
No, naturally.  
Creative artists have a respect for  
cadavers. We treat them with reverence.  
Put them in soft beds, lay them on fur  
rugs, at the foot of a staircase...  
...but we could never throw them from  
a car like cigarette butts.  
No. What would Emily Post say?  
And having confused you,

I have to go.  
Don't go. It's only 10:00.  
It's past my bedtime.  
Besides, I have a late date.  
- May I come again?  
- Often.  
Thank you.  
Give Lochner a report  
on my theory of the murder.  
- Do you think he would want me to?  
- I would.  
Tell him to look for a man like me  
without my artistic temperament.  
Which may or may not be phoney.  
I'll walk down with you.  
- Next time we'll skip the murder kick.  
- Can I depend on it?  
Sure. Bring a girl.  
Give us another chance.  
- Quite an evening.  
- Yes.  
- What do you think?  
- I'm glad you're not a genius.  
- He's a sick man, Brub.  
- No, he isn't.  
- There's something wrong with him.  
- He's like that. He's exciting.  
I took abnormal psychology--  
When we disagree,  
you throw that college stuff at me.  
I know Dix better than you do.  
There's nothing wrong with his mind.  
- He's exciting because he isn't normal.  
- Cops could use abnormality.  
I learned more about the case from him  
than from investigations--  
I still like the way you are: average!  
- Well, thank you kindly!  
- You're welcome.  
I heard you the first time.  
Sit down.  
All right, Martha.  
I'll see you in the morning. Goodbye.  
- You annoy me.

- If I do, it isn't intentional.
- Would you like a drink?
- No, thanks. I don't need one.
- Had too much?
- One martini.
- I knew I was gonna see you.
- Very thoughtful.

Sit down and relax.

- Who's Martha?
- Who?

Oh, Martha.

The only thing left of my movie career.

She's about 50. She's married.

Her son goes to UCLA.

She comes to me twice a week,  
beats me black and blue, for which I--

Have you thought about it  
a second time?

I'm interested.

When did you decide?

Yesterday, about 3 p.m.

I see, just...

...just didn't get around to  
announcing the official results?

I wanted you to think about it twice too.

I've been looking for someone  
for a long time. I didn't know her.

I'd never seen her before.

A girl was killed...

...and because of that I found  
what I was looking for.

Now I know your name, where you live,  
and how you look.

Snooping through windows.

And in broad daylight too.

- Where are your manners?
- Don't tell Dix.
- He'll think I'm checking on him.
- Come in.
- No. He shouldn't be disturbed.
- Oh, yes he should.

He worked all night.

He hasn't left the house in days.

- Won't take me for a drive.

- Incredible!

He hasn't worked like this  
since before the war.

- What do you use, witchcraft?

- Only as a last resort.

He's kind of dopey this morning.

I love him that way. I'll show you.

Dix on.

Mel is here to take you  
to the beauty contest.

I'll be ready in a minute.

He thinks you'll be voted Mr. America.

Good.

Are you really  
the handsomest man alive?

Yep. Just let me finish this page.

You're a conceited good- for- nothing.

And I don't love you.

- It's your money I'm after.

- Hey, turn off the radio.

- Genius is going to bed.

- Don't! Let me finish this scene.

If he'd met you 10 years ago,

I wouldn't have ulcers today.

What's my first name?

- Hi.

- Say hello to our guest.

Oh, hello, Mel.

What are you doing up?

Can we have coffee?

- No, you're going to bed.

- It's not dark outside.

That's because it's tomorrow. Today.

You haven't slept since yesterday.

If Brody could see, he'd be delighted.

We've got lots of pages for him.

Come on, you're going to bed.

If you don't let me alone,

I'm gonna kick you out.

I'll go back to Chicago

and be a Fuller Brush girl.

They were crazy about me

in the Near North Side.

You go when I tell you to go.

Remember that.

- I'll try.

- See, he's right.

You can't go.

You couldn't do that to us.

Lower the bridge, open the gates!

Charles Waterman is here!

- It must be Thursday.

- Speaks poetry and borrows money.

- The better to drink brandy.

- Ready to pay homage to an immortal!

Fair princess, most noble princes, I  
bring greetings from a humble peasant.

Welcome, thespian.

There he goes again.

He can never figure that step out.

- You may arise, thespian.

- Easier said than done.

You've come at the wrong time.

We were putting Dix to bed.

Do me the honour

and let me prepare him for repose.

To secure pleasant slumbers,

I shall recite to him.

- Wouldn't you rather have a brandy?

- Most beautiful words in English.

Come, royal boy.

When in disgrace

With fortune and men's eyes

I all alone beweeep my outcast state

And trouble deaf heaven

With my bootless cries

And look upon myself and curse my fate

Really, you must stop snooping!

Just a few pages.

I won't say a word.

- He'll show you when it's finished.

- How many pages?

- Many.

- Is he sticking close to the book?

I don't know. I didn't read the book.

Miss Gray,

there's a man upstairs to see you.

Thank you, Effie. Don't vacuum.



Mr. Steele's just gone to sleep.

- Well, I gotta vacuum sometime.

- By all the bulls of Bashan!

If anyone else did it, I would shout,  
" Ignorant swine!"

I am perplex ed. As I said:

" From sullen earth sings hymns at  
heaven's gate, " he began to snore.

There's no hope, no hope at all.

For thy sweet love remembered

Such wealth brings

That then I scorn to change

My state with kings

Then I scorn to change

My state with kings

- Hello. Remember me, Sgt. Nicolai?

- Oh, yes, of course.

- What can I do for you?

- Capt. Lochner wants to talk.

I have nothing to say to him.

I didn't expect you to give me  
more information...

...but certain facts  
contradict your original statement.

- I wish you'd say what you mean.

- Yes, let's do that.

On the night of the Atkinson murder,  
you looked at Dix on Steele...

- ...and said you didn't know him.

- I didn't.

Since then, you and he  
have been inseparable.

He's writing a script.

I'm typing it.

- Do you receive a salary for this?

- No. I'm doing it for love.

- You're in love with Mr. Steele?

- For the record, I am.

- Are you going to be married?

- If we do, I'll send you an invitation.

After all, you introduced us  
to each other.

- You're not making my job any easier.

- I don't see how I could.

Why the chip on your shoulder?  
Why the defiant attitude? Aren't we  
on the same side in this matter?  
Doesn't it frighten you  
that there's a killer at large?  
He may be in your building.  
Certainly in your neighbourhood.  
Look at these men.  
They seem perfectly normal to you?  
Yes.  
Each one has committed  
a horrible murder.  
Each one is a ruthless maniac.  
Mildred Atkinson wasn't killed for any  
understandable reason.  
She had no money, no enemies.  
It wasn't a sex murder.  
The act of a sick mind with an urge to  
destroy something young and lovely.  
I recognize your position, captain,  
but you must recognize mine.  
I love Dix. It upsets me that you  
suspect him, even for a second.  
Not a second, for three weeks.  
He's our most logical suspect.  
Why don't you investigate  
her boyfriend?  
We have.  
He seems absolutely in the clear.  
But look at Mr. Steele's record:  
Fights, scandals, destruction.  
It all adds up to the same thing:  
an erratic, violent man.  
All this happened years ago.  
He's changed.  
He has?  
Ask Sgt. Nicolai about  
the other night.  
How he dwelled on the murder.  
How he made Brub and his wife act it  
out. Obviously, killing fascinates him.  
I don't believe that.  
Because you're in love with him.  
Thank you for coming.

- Goodbye, captain.

- Goodbye.

Go on, say it. " I told you so."

Where would that get us?

I violated your confidence.

I'm sorry.

It's all right.

You know what you're doing.

- I've got Mr. Kesler.

- Hello, Mr. Kesler.

- How do you do?

- Sorry to inconvenience you.

A few points that aren't quite clear.

Maybe you can help me.

I hope I can.

Please sit down.

- Hi, Kesler.

- Hello, sergeant.

Anything you want to make you happy?

I wouldn't want anyone but you.

What's he doing here?

With or without his wife or tailing me.

Come on, let's get out of here.

Hello, Miss Gray. Hello.

We've warmed up a couple seats for you.

We're going to Paul's.

I want to do everything I can  
to make your job easier.

I could see why that guy  
gets into a lot of trouble.

Six hours' sleep. Typing all day.

No wonder your nerves  
are tied in knots.

You can't be a nursemaid  
and a sweetheart...

...a cook and a secretary.

You've got to think of yourself.

- I've never been happier in my life.

- Come on, angel. Relax.

Ouch! Martha, you're hurting me!

We should be up on Miller Drive beside  
that pool Mr. Baker built for you.

He built it to increase property value.

I was waiting for him to raise rent.

He's a good businessman who wants to get married. What's wrong with that? A girl like you should think about security. And remember...  
...in the beginning was the land.  
Motion pictures came later.  
Okay, turn over.  
Dix, is that you?  
Yeah. You decent?  
No, I'm not. Martha's here.  
- Hello, Martha.  
- Hello.  
- You get the pages I did last night?  
- On my table.  
I took them from your desk this morning.  
- Where have you been?  
- None of your business.  
I want some orange juice, eggs, bacon, toasted muffin and lots of coffee.  
What, no caviar?  
You'll get breakfast in 10 minutes.  
- We're going to a beach party tonight.  
- Good.  
With the Nicolais. You met him.  
Lochner's office. Remember?  
Yes. Vaguely.  
You really want to go?  
Be back in five minutes.  
They still don't know who killed that checkroom girl.  
They don't?  
- Have you met Frances Randolph?  
- No.  
I used to take care of her.  
All right, tell me. What happened?  
What did Mr. Steele do to her?  
Nothing much. Just beat her up.  
Broke her nose.  
Why didn't you warn her? Tell her not to get involved with a brute like Dix?  
You can joke about it, angel...  
...but someday you'll find out who your friend is. I hope it isn't too late.

This isn't going to be as easy to get out of as it was with Mr. Baker.

That's enough, Martha. Get out!

I'll get out, angel...

...but you'll beg me to come back when you're in trouble.

You will, angel, because you don't have anybody else.

Get out.

I love a picnic.

- Acres of sand, all of it in your food.

- Stop griping. Lie still and inhale.

- What, sand?

- Air. And don't let it go to your head.

He's worked like a fiend all week.

- I've wanted to know how writers work.

- Usually in a sitting position.

- That's wonderful! Not cold at all!

- Oh, my hero!

I meant, does he usually have the story mapped out?

If not, you're in trouble, unless you have my gal friend here as inspiration.

- Are you feeling all right?

- I wouldn't write a page without her.

The only way I can shut her up is to sit down and write.

How I went for her

I don't know.

You know what she says when she reads something?

" Honey, haven't I read this somewheres before?"

Maybe she has.

That's the trouble with Hollywood dames.

They all have such a sketchy education. They know nothing...

...about the community chest, but everything about community property.

Their arithmetic's not so hot, but just ask them how many minks make a coat.

- How long do you give them, Sylvia?

- Not more than 40 years.

Dix needs you, Laurel.  
You ought to marry him.  
You have to. You promised Lochner  
you'd invite him to the wedding.  
She promised Lochner what?  
Did I say Lochner? I meant Brub.  
You're a poor liar, Sylvia.  
- When did you see him?  
- The other day.  
- It was just a routine deal.  
- Why didn't you tell me?  
- It would only have upset you.  
- You're lying to me!  
I'm not lying, I just didn't tell you.  
I'm sorry.  
Still checking on me.  
Still trying to pin a murder on me!  
I don't know why I said it.  
Brub especially asked me not to.  
Maybe it's better. I should have  
told him in the first place. Dix!  
Dix!  
Dix!  
Cigarette?  
Watch it, Dix!  
You blind, knuckle- headed squirrel!  
- Take it easy, son.  
- Look at my car!  
I just got a new paint job.  
I ought to drag you out of--  
Dix! Stop it!  
Stop it! Let him alone!  
Dix, don't you--  
Dix, stop! You'll kill him!  
I'll take that cigarette now.  
Want one?  
No.  
These guys in hopped- up cars  
think they own the road.  
You weren't angry with him.  
You've wanted to fight  
since you left the beach.  
The beach had nothing to do with it.  
He asked for it.

- I've had a hundred fights like this.

- Are you proud of it?

No, but I'm usually in the right.

You heard what he called me.

That doesn't justify  
acting like a madman.

Nobody can call me the things he did.

A blind, knuckle-headed squirrel.

That's real bad.

You drive.

I was born when she kissed me...

...I died when she left me...

...I lived a few weeks  
while she loved me.

You like it?

What is it?

I want to put it in the script.

I don't know quite where.

The farewell note?

I don't know. Maybe.

Say it back to me.

Let's hear how it sounds.

I was born when she kissed me...

...I died when she left me, I....

I lived a few weeks while she loved me.

- Hi.

- Hello.

Mason. Sender, Joe Squirrel.

- You Mr. Squirrel?

- That's right.

- You got a stamped envelope?

- Sure.

Here you are, Mr. Squirrel.

- Sgt. Nicolai?

- Sgt. Nicolai is busy right now.

I'll wait.

Hi, Dix.

Oh, hello, Brub.

- How do you feel this morning?

- About the same as last evening.

What can I do for you?

If you want to find out anything  
about me, ask me.

I do. But I'm a cop, remember?

I take orders.  
Sorry to be late, Sgt. Nicolai.  
Noon rush at the bank.  
Dix on Steele, Henry Kesler.  
- Hello.  
- How are you?  
They trying to pin this thing on you  
the same as they are on me?  
- If they are, I'm not aware of it.  
- You're a much more logical candidate.  
You loved her.  
You could've been jealous.  
If I were Capt. Lochner,  
I could get a good case against you.  
- Glad to have met you.  
- What an imagination.  
That's from writing movies.  
What a grip.  
That's from counting money.  
This is what I'd like to have someday.  
Small cosy house, near the ocean.  
Brub painted the walls.  
I made the lampshades and curtains.  
They look it too.  
Dix wanted me to tell you  
how bad he feels about last night.  
It was my fault.  
No. There was no excuse  
for his behaviour.  
He's a writer. They can afford  
to be temperamental.  
I'm afraid he'd act just the same  
no matter what he did.  
- You certainly picked a wonderful spot.  
- On a clear day we can see Catalina.  
He's very much in love with you.  
Sylvia, Lochner said that Dix described  
the murder of Mildred Atkinson. Did he?  
We were both very impressed with his  
imagination. Why should that worry you?  
You know he didn't do it.  
You saw him after the girl left.  
Of course.  
He had nothing against her.



- That's what Brub says.

- I know.

Lochner has a different idea.

He believes Dix could've done it.

- I felt like he was trying to warn me.

- Don't pay any attention to Lochner.

You don't realize

what he's doing to us.

I suppose it isn't just Lochner.

There's something strange about Dix.

I worry about it. I stay awake nights  
trying to find out what it is.

Then he shows up with an armload  
of packages and he's so sweet...

- ...and he makes me feel--

- Ashamed of what you've been thinking?

Tell him how you feel.

What can I say?

" I love you, but I'm afraid of you."

" I want to marry you, but convince  
me you didn't kill Mildred Atkinson."

You should go away for a while,  
I really think you should.

Give yourself a little time.

Figure things out quietly.

You're too anxious.

Sylvia, after we left you, Dix got  
into an argument with a man.

He acted like a maniac.

I thought he was going to kill him.

I thought maybe he acted  
just the same with Mildred.

I came here because I wanted to say  
these things and be laughed at.

But you're not laughing.

They still don't know who killed that  
checkroom girl.

This isn't going to be as easy  
to get out of.

It was the act of a sick mind  
with an urge to destroy.

An erratic, violent man.

Our most logical suspect.

Killing has a fascination for him.

I wanted to say these things out loud  
and be laughed at.  
But you're not laughing.  
Good morning, Mr. Steele.  
Going to see Miss Gray?  
I'll take those. It'll give me  
an excuse to see her.  
You don't need an excuse,  
but I need a new pair of legs.  
- I'll be back tomorrow with the rest.  
- Goodbye, Mr. Swan.  
Morning, Effie.  
Miss Gray awake?  
I've told you.  
Don't vacuum when she's sleeping.  
She can't hear nothing.  
She takes pills.  
- Since when?  
- I don't know.  
She must have worked all night.  
I wish you two would get married  
and go on a honeymoon.  
Then I could get these  
two apartments cleaned up.  
Shut it off, honey,  
and go back to sleep.  
I can't. The clock's too far away.  
- I'll shut it off or you if you want.  
- All right, come in.  
Wanna go back to sleep?  
No, I'll get up.  
I'll start breakfast.  
You might open the door for me.  
Beg your pardon, Effie.  
I'll do it, Dix.  
No, I don't want you to.  
Sit down, be comfortable.  
Room service, coming up.  
- What happened to the grapefruit knife?  
- It was crooked and I straightened it.  
Fool. It's supposed to be curved.  
What? Wonder what they'll  
think of next.  
I finished the pages.

Yeah, I noticed you also covered the script.  
What are you trying to prove?  
You won't get a raise.  
I love the love scene.  
It's very good.  
They're not always telling each other how in love they are.  
Good love scenes should be about something beside love. Like this one.  
Me fixing grapefruit, you sitting over there dopey, half asleep.  
Anyone looking at us could tell we were in love.  
Effie wants us to get married.  
It'll give her a chance to...  
...vacuum the apartment while we're away.  
Isn't there a simpler way?  
I always knew I'd get stuck with you eventually. All I needed was a push.  
Come on, dopey.  
Where'd you get the pills?  
From my doctor.  
When did you see your doctor?  
Couple of weeks ago.  
Well, why didn't I know about that?  
I guess it wasn't important enough to mention.  
You haven't always wanted to know things about me.  
- You ought to be very flattered I do.  
- I am. And I love you.  
But there's no reason to rush into anything.  
Who said anything about rushing?  
I thought if you'd give me an answer, say in the next 10 seconds...  
...I'd go out and buy a ring.  
Then we could have a party tonight...  
...invite a few select friends and enemies...  
...fly to Las Vegas

and be married by--

The coffee!

Well, the 10 seconds are up.

- Of course I'll marry you, but--

- No.

No "of course, " no " but, " no "why."

Yes or no will do.

A simple yes or no will do very well.

Yes.

Effie, it's okay, you can vacuum

tomorrow. Both apartments.

- Dix, wait. What's happened?

- Effie, you tell him.

Well, tell me.

I guess they're gonna get married.

It's me, Mel.

Laurel, I can't tell you

how happy I am!

Would you ask Miss--?

Martha to call me as soon as she can?

Thank you.

I prayed for this.

It had to come true.

We'll be such a happy family.

I'll come have dinner...

...I'll play with the kids--

You don't have to worry,

I won't come too often.

I'll only teach the kids nice things.

You're not going to marry him?

No, I'm not. I can't.

I see.

I was hoping for a miracle,

and it didn't happen.

I tried, Mel. I wanted it to last

so much, for my own sake.

But Dix doesn't act

like a normal person.

You don't go around hitting people,

smashing cars, torturing your best friend.

I'm scared of him.

I don't trust him.

I'm not even sure

he didn't kill Mildred Atkinson.

Laurel! You're going too far!  
Am I? Have you forgot what you asked  
me when we first met?  
You weren't sure either, and  
you knew him better than anyone.  
Why can't he be like other people?  
Why?  
Like other people?  
Would you have liked him?  
You knew he was dynamite.  
He has to explode sometimes.  
I tried to make him see a psychiatrist.  
I thought he'd kill me.  
Always violent.  
It's as much a part of him  
as the colour of his eyes.  
If you want him, you've got to take  
the bad with the good.  
I've taken it for 20 years.  
And I'd do it again.  
You make me feel ashamed, Mel.  
- I should stay with him, but I can't.  
- Why did you tell him you'd marry him?  
I was scared. I still am!  
I hate to see that.  
You can't hurt him like this.  
Dix has a tremendous ego.  
He can't take defeat.  
You've got to wait until  
something good happens.  
He wants to take me  
to Las Vegas tonight.  
I've got to get out  
before he gets back!  
If Brody only liked the script,  
that would help a lot.  
If Dix has success, he doesn't need  
anything else.  
Then take the script. It's finished.  
And it's wonderful.  
It's really wonderful.  
Take it to Brody now.  
Thank you, Mel. I'll write to you.  
Don't. I don't want to know

where you are...  
...because Dix will ask  
and I'll have to tell him.  
If you feel like writing, write to him.  
Then maybe later  
you'll come back to us.  
I hope so.  
See you.  
Goodbye, Mel.  
Yes, this is she.  
About your reservation to New York,  
we may have some space...  
...on Flight 22 at 3 p.m. Will you be  
at this number for another hour?  
Yes, I'll be here. Please let me know  
as quickly as you can.  
I got four blocks away and remembered  
I don't know your ring size.  
- Here. This is about right.  
- I want you to choose it.  
You have to wear it  
the rest of your life.  
- I still haven't packed.  
- Do it later.  
We've gotta look at houses...  
...and I want to buy you a little car.  
Come on.  
Why are you always in a hurry?  
Are you going to come  
or do I have to drag you?  
- I'm only half dressed.  
- That's good enough for me.  
Greetings!  
Mr. Waterman, you forgot  
to change your costume.  
This is not a costume,  
ignorant wench.  
It is the formal attire of a gentleman.  
No applause, please.  
Mine host, you've slighted me.  
Where's the red carpet...  
...the lackeys with candelabra,  
the trumpeters?  
Are we not celebrating

a royal engagement?

Of course we are,

but it's to be held incognito.

Hi, Charlie.

Forgive the smell of mothballs.

My sincerest congratulations,  
princess.

Let me embrace you, noble prince.

My senses tell me you've  
had a few, thespian.

I've been celebrating  
since your call.

- Brandy for Mr. Waterman.

- What did you do this red-letter day?

So much it's difficult to remember.

First I got a ring, then we looked at  
houses, then we bought clothes.

- He hasn't left me alone for a second.

- Sounds fascinating, princess.

Let me see the jewel.

Exquisite taste! The princess must  
not pick the polish from her nails.

The princess has been acting  
very strangely.

Your table's ready.

Hello, Dix. I understand you're  
getting married?

That's right. Laurel Gray,  
this is Frances Randolph.

- Hello, my dear. Congratulations.

- Thank you, Miss Randolph.

Come on, Fran. Join the elite.

You got a wonderful guy, Laurel,  
and believe me, I should know--

- Oh, what am I saying?

- That's all right. I've told Laurel...  
...you used to pursue me.

Brody wants me

for the part of Althea.

I'm going to read the script tonight.

- Whose script?

- Yours, genius.

He's going to send it to my house.

If he likes it.

- Did he say where he got my script?
- I took it to him this morning.
- I stole it out of Laurel's desk.
- I gave it to him.
- Brody's been so impatient.
- I'm sorry, Mel.
- I know Brody will love it.
- It's not you. Mel should know better.
- Is there a juicy part in it for me?
- Did you read it?
- No.
- You're lying! You didn't like it.

What does it matter what I think?

I tried to talk Selznick out of  
Gone with the Wind.

- What's wrong with it?
- Nothing. But, it's not the book.

Brody asked for

a faithful adaptation.

- The book was trash and you're a thief.
- Dix, please!
- Telephone, Miss Gray.
- Thank you.

She'll take it here.

Never mind. Ask them  
to call me at home later.

Bring the phone.

I said, bring the phone!

I don't want to talk to anybody.

You don't want to talk  
in front of me.

Why is it so important

Brody reads it today?

- He's impatient. Has been for weeks.
- But why today?
- Hello, who's this?
- Don't, Dix!

Martha. You calling Miss Gray

or are you phoning for Mr. Baker?

That's Laurel's call.

- For heaven's sake!
- I'll see you later.

Are you all right, Miss Gray?

Dixie, my boy, you're in!



And believe me, it's harder  
to come back than to arrive.  
Brody's delighted with the script.  
He's raving about it!  
Break your glasses?  
No. Yes.  
Cut your eyes?  
No.  
Lloyd just got here.  
Brody's crazy about the script.  
I told you not to pay  
any attention to me.  
Do you want me to look  
for another agent?  
Well, business isn't so hot.  
Remind me to get you another tie.  
Where's Laurel?  
She's gone.  
- One moment, please.  
- See you, Paul.  
All right.  
Cancel the Steele dinner.  
Hello, Paul's Restaurant.  
Paul speaking.  
Mr. Dix on Steele?  
Just a minute.  
He's just left.  
Oh, Sgt. Nicolai?  
I'll tell him, Sgt. Nicolai. Bye.  
He just left the restaurant.  
You mind if I read Kesler's  
confession to him?  
Know what?  
I'm gonna get drunk tonight.  
Don't let a right guess  
go to your head.  
It's been a terrific strain  
on Laurel and Dix.  
They'll never forget Mildred Atkinson.  
Or you.  
I extracted the bullet  
from Kesler's left lung...  
...that far from the heart.  
He's lucky.

- I wonder.  
- I wanna try him at home.  
Yeah, keep on trying.  
Dix?  
Let me in.  
I'm in bed.  
I have an awful headache.  
Laurel, let me in, please!  
- It's been such a hectic day!  
- Let me in!  
Don't make me ask you again!  
What is it, Dix?  
I'm sorry about tonight.  
It'll never happen again.  
I shouldn't have hit Mel, shouldn't  
have picked up the telephone....  
I don't know why I....  
Cigarette?  
Where's your ring?  
I put it in my jewel box.  
You should never take it off  
your finger. Put it on.  
Not now.  
- Where is it? I'll get it.  
- Dix, can't you relax for a second?  
Why is this door locked?  
Who's in there?  
Nobody. It's a mess.  
I didn't want you to see it.  
Open it!  
- Please, don't order me around.  
- Why is it a mess?  
Because I've been packing.  
We're going away, remember?  
Give me that key.  
All right, I'll get the ring.  
You scared me.  
There.  
- This all you're taking?  
- I just started to pack when you came.  
I thought you were in bed.  
Were you packing to go on a  
honeymoon? Or to run away?  
Stop it, Dix!

I can't take any more of this!

Hello.

Who?

Oh, I'll give her the message.

You have a cancellation  
on Flight 16 for New York.

I'll tell her.

There's a cancellation  
on Flight 16 for New York.

I'll stay with you, Dix.

I promise.

I'll marry you!

I'll go with--

- You'd run away from me!

- I can't live with a maniac!

I'll never let you go!

Dix, don't! Don't! Please, please!

Don't, Dix! Please don't!

Hello.

Dix, I've been trying  
to get you everywhere.

I've got some news  
for you and Laurel.

Just got an airtight confession  
from Kesler.

Your hunch was right.

He killed her.

Let me talk. I want to apologize  
to him and Miss Gray.

Is Laurel there? Capt. Lochner wants  
to apologize to both of you.

Man wants to apologize to you.

Hello?

Miss Gray?

I want you to know how sorry I am  
I had to put you through this.

Mr. Steele is absolutely in the clear.

I hope you'll both accept my apologies.

Yesterday this would have meant  
so much to us.

Now it doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter at all.

I lived a few weeks while you loved me.

Goodbye, Dix.