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The Bad and the Beautiful

By Charles Schnee

Stage 5.

Mr. Amiel is rehearsing right now.

Very nice.

Honey, could you put your hand
up by your throat?

Telephone, Mr. Amiel.

Transatlantic, Paris. Jonathan Shields.

- Who?

- Jonathan Shields.

- Number one!

- Bring the boom back to one.

I'm sorry, Mr. Amiel just left.

Hello? Yes.

Who? One moment, please.

Miss Georgia!

It's Paris, France. It's him!

I can't hear you.

It's Mr. Jonathan!

Jonathan Shields.

I still can't hear you.

Miss Lorrison is out.

No, I don't know.

No. I don't know where.

No, I don't know who...

...nor where, nor what.

Out is out!

Hello.

What?

Talk a little louder, please.

It's a bad connection.

Yes, this is James Lee Bartlow.

Paris?

Mr. Shields?

Is Mr. Shields paying for this call?

Put him on.

Hello, Jonathan?

Drop dead.

- Hello, hello, hello.

- Harry, how are you?

- Georgia.

- Harry.

Since I became 60, more beautiful
women have kissed me than ever before.

You youngsters wouldn't know

anything about that.

Nice to see you.

That waistline is back down.

- Still keeping long hours.

- A little bit of midnight oil.

You can tell a successful author
by a cashmere jacket.

I'm trying to get a wardrobe like
yours. You're known for your style.

Georgia, darling. Come over
and sit down.

Freddie, take this chair.

- Congratulations on the Pulitzer Prize.

- Thanks, Harry.

- Your picture was great as usual, Fred.

- Thank you, Harry.

And you, my pretty one,
you really made me cry.

Have I flattered you enough?

Here's why I asked you here
in the middle of the night.

Why Jonathan called you today.

Jimmy told me you told him to drop dead.

Is that Pulitzer language?

James Lee never wrote a better line!

Well, here it is. After two years
Jonathan's ready to produce a picture.

He wants you to write it,
you to direct and you to star.

On the name Jonathan Shields,
it's impossible to raise five cents.

But on Fred Amiel, Georgia Lorrison,
James Lee Bartlow...

...I can raise \$2,000,000
by tomorrow noon.

I'm not going to beg you after
two years of begging for Jonathan.

That's enough. I know you'll never
work with him again.

But he doesn't get that.

Please. A favor to me, not to him.

Will you give me your answer
while I get him on the phone?

Good.

Get me the transatlantic operator.

We're ready to talk

with Jonathan Shields in Paris.

- Yes, sir.

- Thank you.

You won't work with him.

I don't blame you.

Why should you? You've done enough
for him already... and vice versa.

Fred, you knew him first. You must
have known him for 15 or 16...

That guy standing next to me.

How should I know who he was?

We are met, my friends,
on a solemn occasion.

This man, Hugo Shields...

...whose memory

we all cherish in our hearts...

...whose loss we mourn so deeply.

Hugo Shields, one of the pioneers...

...who built our great
motion-picture industry.

A madman who almost wrecked it.

A man of vision. An artist,
who created in the new medium...

A butcher who sold all
but the pig's whistle.

Hugo Shields brought
entertainment to millions.

He will never be forgotten.

Stay in line and take it easy.

You'll get your dough.

Thank you, Mr. Shields.

You're Shields?

You were hired to perform.

\$11 to act like a mourner.

You didn't do your job,
you don't get paid. Next.

Next!

That afternoon I drove into
the Hollywood Hills. I just had to.

- It's me, Big Mouth.

- Come for a fight or your 11 bucks?

The things I said at the funeral

were childish and cheap. I'm sorry.

- Wait a minute.

- What is it?

You in the business?

What do you do?

Bit of everything: Assistant director

on Poverty Row, four-day quickies...

...sold a couple of story ideas. To eat

I work as an extra and do stunts.

- What I aim to be is a director.

- What's stopping you?

I can direct better than most

of the hacks I work for.

When it comes to telling people

how good I am, I get tongue-tied.

I'm not that tongue-tied with you.

- You are looking for a job?

- Yeah.

So am I.

Come on in.

If my father had died last year,

I'd be a millionaire.

Next year, he'd have put up

a new studio for me to inherit.

This year, I don't have a dime.

- Who paid the crowd at the funeral?

- That was the last of the cash.

He lived in a crowd.

I couldn't let him be buried alone.

The best legal counsel advised me

to change my name.

Because the town thought

your father was a heel?

He wasn't a heel.

He was the heel.

We couldn't stand living in the
same town, but I liked him a lot.

He made great pictures. So will I.

You haven't got much to begin with.

No, he brought me up to start at the
top. How do you start at the bottom?

- Are you gonna change your name?

- Change it?

I'm gonna ram the name of Shields

down their throats.
Where are you living?
Until they kick me out,
this is my bed and board.
Come on.
By the way, my name is Fred Amiel.
- Hi.
- Hi.
but jobs were sky-high.
Particularly if your name was Shields.
Some days we'd hit with a quickie
or a Western on Poverty Row...
... and eat well.
Okay, boys. Let's go.
Grab that one.
And some nights we played.
We crashed only the very best parties.
If the actor counts five between
each word, you think he's good.
And directing? If you don't film it,
get it in the cutting room.
Man's in love, cut to a cactus.
She goes crazy, fade into a wheel.
Montage, montage!
But where is your story?
All right, so I won't argue with you.
I'm taking off my agent hat
and putting on my friendship hat.
This boy can be the biggest ever,
your next Victor Ribera.
He's got everything: Heart, brains
and he's beautiful to look at.
I don't care what she writes about me.
It's what she wrote about Arturo.
He hit me and hurt me.
I'm not always yelling about
a star's right to a private life.
Fans are entitled to see us
in the flesh sometimes.
Only last week I was in New York...
I've got a full house,
and you can't have four of a kind. No.
Not even in one of your B pictures!
- Harry, I think you're bluffing.

- Put up or shut up.

Money talks, and I've got money.

I raise you 500.

- Right back at you.

- Five, and five more.

- Call.

- Four fours.

When did you begin to tell the truth?

Don't tell me "today." What time today?

- Harry Pebbel's a great poker player.

- Yeah.

But my father could always beat him,

and I could always beat my father.

- To get in a game like that, I need...

- You're crazy!

All I need is a few hundred dollars

for my first stack of chips.

What's a few hundred dollars when

four citizens pool their resources?

Came the dawn...

- Good night, gentlemen.

- Good night.

- Jonathan!

- How much did you win?

- Five hundred?

- A thousand?

- More than that. Six thousand.

- Jonathan!

I lost.

To be exact, I lost \$6,351.

- Who won?

- Harry Pebbel.

Harry, I admit it.

I lost the money and I owe you.

- I wish I could pay.

- It's breaking your heart.

- I could give you an IOU.

- What would I do with it?

You don't run this studio,

but you're an executive producer.

- B pictures...

- They make money.

You have four producers, why not five?

At \$300 a week I could pay you off,

slowly, but surely.

\$6,351.

- All right, you got the job.

- I thought so.

So you're a genius boy.

You think you blackmailed me!

Harry, that's a horrid word.

Well, get this.

My unit turns out 18 pictures a year.

I cry for ideas. If you'd sweat out a story the way you do \$6,351...

...I'd have hired you anyway.

Why didn't you come to me? Too proud?

I tried to. I couldn't get in.

- You know who gave me my first job?

- My father.

- You angle things the cute way.

- I'll pay you \$100 a week.

I wouldn't take a dime. Just bring me a picture I can shoot, Genius Boy.

- One day you'll work for me.

- Get me Joe Clareton in publicity.

Meanwhile, I need an office with a desk for my assistant.

Shields. Amiel.

- That's a big dream, Jonathan.

- If you dream, dream big.

Meanwhile, you'll be drawing a modest check each Thursday.

It's time you two made it legal.

- Tell him he's crazy, IKKay.

- You're crazy.

- Tell him I'm not.

- He's not.

I just happen to have a ring with me.

Syd Murphy knows a friend who knows a jeweler.

- Shall we?

- Tell him yes, IKKay.

He said to tell me yes.

She says yes very nicely.

The next few years, Shields produced

I directed the third

and five more after that.

We weren't really picturemakers,
we were second-hand dealers.
But we learnt our trade.
Then, one cloudy day, Harry Pebbel
assigned us a horror...
... called The Doom of the Cat Men.
This the sort of thing you had in mind?
They need freshening up, though.
- I can't get into this.
- Don't worry.
If they don't turn around too much,
some muslin will hide it.
This needs fitting. Our department
will take care of that.
This may be a problem
unless you get a thinner man.
This material is imported.
We can't get it anymore.
But don't let that be an obstacle.
Here, the perfect fit.
This will give the full effect.
Lots of character and detail.
Plenty of fright. Needs puffing, but it'll do.
You gotta visualize it in the lights,
use imagination.
Shoulder pads will straighten it out.
This will give you the effect.
It'll be good.
- What if...?
- Suppose we...
- Five men dressed like cats look like...
- Five men dressed like cats.
When an audience pays to see this,
what do they pay for?
- To get the pants scared off them?
- What scares us more than anything?
- The dark!
- Of course, and why?
The dark has a life of its own,
and all sorts of things come alive.
- Suppose we never show the cat men.
- Exactly.
No cat men.
What do we put on the screen that'll

make the backs of their necks crawl?
Two eyes shining in the dark.

A dog:

showing its fangs.

A bird:

feathers torn from its throat.

A little girl:

claw marks down her cheeks.

Cut!

Okay, boys, new deal. Wrap it up!

This is my first star!

The night of the sneak preview,
Harry Pebbel still hadn't seen it.

Jonathan and I
had made sure of that.

Go, go, go!

- Hurry, hurry.

- Now, sir.

"It stinks":

"Good":

We've never had cards like this.

- Give us more like this one.

- "Excellent":

I'll put these in the executive dining room.

That'll show 'em.

- What Harry Pebbel can do...

- Be at my office at 10:00 a.m.

I'll give you your next assignment.

You did all right.

I did a great job at producing.

Tell that to the executives.

And remember that "Shields"

is not spelled P-E-B-B-E-L.

I don't wanna give you too much credit.

Just enough to keep you hungry.

By the way, my name

is spelled A-M-I-E-L.

I thought of taking a small bow myself.

A small bow never helped anybody.
Get this straight, Fred.
We're building Shields Productions.
What we'll ram it down their throats.
- It's big enough for both of us.
- I know.
A five-cent story, a ten-cent budget
and a two-cent leading man...
...and we put it over.
We're getting to know our business.
- Yes, Mother.
- Let's go back and get my car.
When I work on a picture,
it's like romancing a girl.
You see her, you want her,
you go after her. The big moment.
Then, the letdown. Every time.
The after-picture blues.
Don't worry. Someday you'll learn
to love 'em and leave 'em.
- Why are you turning off here?
- This you got to see.
Crow's Nest.
George Lorrison built this.
This is where he died.
I wouldn't have missed it for anything.
Can we go home now?
So this is how actors used to live.
Cheerful little place, isn't it?
Now, if we can just find out
where he keeps the boiling oil...
The rumpus room.
Jonathan, will you please tell me
what we're doing here?
You scouting a location?
Sure, that's it.
For our next Harry Pebbel production.
It could be
The Bat Men Fly Again...
...or Mama Vampire
and the Three Little Bloodsuckers.
- We don't even have to show...
- Hold this.
Lorrison's idea of my old man.

Lorrison's last three pictures
were for my father.
He gave me my first drink
when I was 13.
My first cigar at 14.
And when I was 15...
...he taught me the facts of life.
He was a great actor...
...and a great man.
- He was a rat and a drunk.
- Who are you?
- His daughter.
- I didn't know he had one.
- Neither did he half the time.
- What are you doing up there?
- Get out.
"A rat and a drunk."
What talk about your father!
He was my father.
Now, shut up and leave me alone?
- Go on, blow.
- Somebody ought to tan your rear!
Wanna try it?
I changed my mind.
Now, will you get out of here?
Go on, get out!
The next morning, Jonathan
received our next assignment.
Did you see Harry?
Well, what's our next picture?
Get a good grip on yourself.
You ready?
Our next picture will be
The Son of the Cat Men.
That settles it.
The time has come.
The Faraway Mountain.
It's a great book.
Three studios tried to lick it and couldn't.
Well, I can!
Here's my outline, scene for scene.
- You know what Harry will say.
- Yeah.
"Look, I've told you

a hundred times, Genius Boy...
...I want pictures that end with
a kiss and ink on the books."
Jonathan, this is my baby.
I found it and I licked it.
I've been nursing it till I was sure
we could handle it. Now I'm sure.
Remember what you said last night?
Enough practice.
It's time we made one for real.
It cries for a million dollar budget
and location in Veracruz...
...but you producing and me directing,
we can do it on a Harry Pebbel budget.
- For a guy who's tongue-tied...
- I could always talk to you.
You really wanna do this one, Fred.
I wanna direct it so much
I can taste it.
All right, let's do it.
Let's do it!
I've said 100 times
I don't wanna win awards.
Give me pictures that end with a kiss
and ink on the books.
I make this picture, or I quit.
This is my baby.
I found it, and I licked it.
I wanna produce it so much I can taste it!
I'm handing it to you,
father of The Son of the Cat Men.
Do I produce The Faraway Mountain
or don't I?
All right, Genius Boy.
You've got it coming to you.
Make it and hang yourself.
Why don't you fire me
and get it over with?
I know the talk around the studio.
They say I need you, that you do
the work and I get the credit.
You think I don't know anything.
Well, I know one thing:
Every studio in town turned

this stinker down. Go ahead, make it.
It'll lay such a bomb you'll never get
another job in this industry.
Will I let you produce it?
You're on suspension if you don't!
I thought my Faraway Mountain
outline was perfect.
After three weeks with Jonathan,
it was twice as good.
We worked day and night.
Kay kept the coffee hot and handy.
As Jonathan shaped our material,
I saw what Hollywood...
... later came to call
the "Shields touch," Jonathan's magic.
Our toughest problem
was a leading man.
On a Harry Pebbel budget,
a top star was out of the question.
So, I directed tests, a dozen tests.
Action.
So you are Theresa.
I find you as your brother told me,
alone in the great house...
... silent, proud and beautiful.
What is it?
Are you afraid of me?
Switch over to the next one.
Action.
So you are Theresa. I find you
as your brother told me I would...
... alone in the great house,
proud, silent and beautiful.
- Who's the girl?
- Douvane said she could test with him.
What did she promise?
Who is she?
George Lorrison's daughter.
Why didn't you shoot her face?
She was drunk.
This is murder, Syd.
Let's have that list again.
You're the director, pick your poison.
Jonathan.

- What about Victor Ribera?
- Gaucho?
- Why not?
- Sure you'd like him. Who wouldn't?
- Why can't we get Gaucho?
- The whole town's after Latin lovers.
- You wouldn't stand a chance.
- How do we know till we've tried?
Maybe you could talk him
into it, Jonathan.
Syd, what would appeal
to a guy like that?
Gaucho? Well, if I know Gaucho...
I'll drive.
Jonathan forgot one thing.
He forgot he couldn't drink.
Nice boy. But does he always
take on so much altitude?
He's been working
night and day for three weeks.
Besides which, he hardly ever drinks.
- He wants me to make a picture?
- Yeah.
Why does he go to all this
lovely trouble? I'm a very simple man.
I read. What I like, I act.
What I do not like...
...I do not act. Very simple.
A conference was held
in Pebbel's office...
... to discuss production plans
for The Faraway Mountain.
The suspense was killing me.
- Yes, Mr. Pebbel?
- You can go to lunch now.
- Why don't you take a look in there?
- I think I'll stay here and be nervous.
- Good luck.
- Thanks.
Jonathan...
- Didn't he go for Gaucho?
- Go for him? He had a hemorrhage!
First time a star said he'd be
in a Pebbel picture.

Harry went to bat for us. He slugged
it out with the front office!
The Faraway Mountain will be made
with a million-dollar budget.
Location in Veracruz.
Von Ellstein to direct.
Gaucho. Wendy for the girl.
Chapman my cameraman...
- Von Ellstein to direct...
- You're taken care of.
No separate panel, but your name on

the screen:

- Thanks.
- You know the story. It's your baby.
I want you on the set. You have
any ideas, I'll tell Von Ellstein.
Thanks, again.
Von Ellstein to direct...
- You said he was the best.
- Sure he is.
Fred, I'd rather hurt you now
than kill you off forever.
You're not ready
to direct a million dollar picture.
But you're ready to produce one.
With Von Ellstein, I am.
You're stealing my picture!
It was my idea!
Without me it was only an idea.
All right, Jonathan.
Let's put it this way.
You gave me your word.
So I did.
I got the starting date.
In two weeks you leave for Veracruz.
Mr. Von Ellstein,
you'll go one week earlier.
Mr. Shields, I don't like producers...
...but for a man with such a script...
...it'll be a pleasure to break my rule.
Today, I shall buy a producer lunch.
- Am I included?
- By all means, no.

Today I've seen a script prepared by
a producer who thinks like a director.
- 13 years I've been making pictures...
- Goodbye, Jonathan.
Fred...
So long, Fred.
This is the first time I've found a
script I can direct exactly as it is...
I always said the boy was a genius.
Are you looking at the Oscar he got
for The Faraway Mountain?
I know what you have
against Jonathan, and no wonder.
Look what he did to you, Fred.
He brushed you off his coattail,
so you had to stand alone.
And all you've got in the world is
a wife, six kids, two Academy Awards...
...and every studio in town after you.
Why, Jonathan ruined you!
Look what he did to me.
I gave him his chance to do
The Faraway Mountain.
Four months later, his contract's up,
and he walks out of the studio.
And I go right with him.
I know how you feel about him, Georgia.
After all, you're a woman
and an actress.
The first time I saw Jonathan,
I was not a woman or an actress.
The next time I saw him,
five years later...
... I wasn't an actress.
I was a nothing.
We'll sign you up outside. 9:00 people,
we'll need you in the background.
Following people, on your way out
please report to wardrobe.
- Mr. Amiel?
- What is it, Georgia?
I'd like to sign out early if I could.
They're casting a bit at Shields.
If I could get there by 3...

- Go ahead. Good luck.
- Thanks, Mr. Amiel.
Gus drove me over.
He waited while I changed.
There were few agents in town
with fewer clients than Gus.
He was the kind of agent
who handled only bit players...
... and who never could get into
a major producer's office.
Gus is still my agent.
Girls, will you come in, please?
Line up right across here.
You stand here, you over here.
Honey, will you come down here?
Thank you.
They're for the drugstore bit.
- How about the newborn baby?
- Four here at 3:45.
Girls. Mr. Shields,
Mr. Pebbel, Mr. McDill.
How do you do?
You're the director.
Is the girl on the end all right?
Yeah, sure.
- You're it.
- Thank you. Girls, come with me.
My call came two days later.
By then, I'd memorized my one line.
I'll wait.
Read any good books lately?
- Cut.
- How was it?
- Was that all right with you?
- Take it again?
- Once again, boys! Here we go!
- How's the makeup?
Try it again.
All right, roll.
- Speed.
- Action.
I'll wait.
Read any good books lately?
- Cut!

- How was it?

Print that. Let's have a test.

- Move in for a close-up.

- New deal, boys.

Your door was unlocked.

For a one-day bit,

you sure expect a lot of company.

For that kind of company,

I don't have to trot here at 4:00 a.m.

- All I have to do is pick up a phone.

- Well, pick one up!

You were under contract to Al Cope.

- Can you hear me?

- Yes.

- You were under contract, right?

- Three years ago, for six months.

Until they found

they had another cluck.

Did you ever play

a real part in a picture?

Last year I played lead

in a little epic called Jungle Tigress.

I ran it. You played straight man

to a chimpanzee. I've tried to find...

I've been trying to find

one decent foot of film on you.

- Is there any?

- Yes.

That one line I did yesterday.

That was good.

But it's not enough to go by.

I want you to make a test for me.

All right, Mr. Shields.

Isn't this scene supposed

to go something like this?

I'll make a test for you, and you'll

be good to me, and I'll be good to you.

Who's kidding who?

It's 4 in the morning.

The test, I don't want it.

I wouldn't be any good anyway.

Just a waste of good film.

But you're a nice-looking guy,

and you did go to a lot of trouble.

And it's getting late,
so shall I turn out the light?
You're very generous.
Too generous.
You're a Lorrison, all right.
The Queen, my lord, is dead.
She should have died hereafter. There
would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow...
... creeps in this petty pace
from day to day...
... to the last syllable of recorded time.
And all our yesterdays have lighted
fools the way to dusty death.
Out, out, brief candle.
Life's but a walking shadow...
... a poor player that struts and frets
his hour upon the stage...
Turn that off and get out!
I wanna get some sleep.
It is a tale told by an idiot.
Full of sound and fury,
signifying nothing.
Turn it off! I don't wanna hear it!
I hate him!
Make up your mind. You hate him,
and you build this shrine.
He died 10 years ago, and you've
been holding a wake since.
You can't be a star in a cemetery.
Stop pitching! I'm one girl
who doesn't wanna be a star.
Because he was a drunk, you are!
He loved girls, so you're a tramp!
You forget one thing.
He did it with style.
And you...
- Put that down.
- Suicide, how many times?
Twice. Put that pipe down!
Too sacred to touch?
Don't waste any sleep over me,
Mr. Shields.
The last time I tried to commit suicide

was six months ago.

- There won't be any next time.

- Won't there?

No.

People who knew my father
give me extra work now and then.

I drink what I want and see who I want.

Who knows?

Someday I may even get married...

...to a nice upright assistant assistant.

And make him miserable
for the rest of his life...

...because you're a Lorrison:

Haunted, living by make-believe.

You're acting now, playing the doomed
daughter of the great man.

The acting isn't good enough.

The cheap performance
of a bit player, not a star.

That's all, until you pull
yourself from this tomb!

Until you can see people as they are,
yourself as you are!

Until you can do this
to your father's picture...

...and laugh as he would have!

That's not a god talking, Georgia,
that's only a man!

You!

Miss Lorrison! Miss Lorrison!

You better tell her it's all right.

It's all right, Mrs. Curry.

Good night, Georgia.

Good night.

It takes two hours
to get ready for a screen test.

Two very-early-in-the-morning hours.

Hello, honey. Here you are.

- Let's run the scene again.

- Thanks, Gus.

"I think you understand."

You mean you're through with me.

This is the end.

- "To put it that bluntly..."

- It means that little to you?
"Look, my dear.
We are two civilized people.
Let us act like civilized people."
They told me about you.
I didn't believe them. You hear...
- "But you're everything..."
- Oh, yeah.
But you're everything they said.
You hear evil.
You see evil. You speak evil.
You are evil.
- Fine. Let's run it again.
- Okay.
... to put it bluntly.
It means that little to you?
Look, my dear.
We're two civilized people.
Let us act like civilized people.
They told me about you.
I didn't believe them.
But you're everything they said.
You hear evil. You see evil.
You speak evil.
You are evil!
What do you think?
Dear Jonathan, since you've paid me
\$100,000 to direct this picture...
...a lot of pound sterling...
...presumably
you want my kind of picture.
With this girl, I tell you,
it won't be my kind of picture.
- She's impossible.
- Quite.
She's wooden, gauche, artificial.
- Completely out of the question.
- Quite.
Syd?
Jonathan, since you hire me
partly to yes you...
- You're fired.
- She stinks.
- You're hired. Harry?

- I know we can get her for nothing.
For nothing you get nothing.
She's nothing.
There were few agents in town
with fewer clients than Gus...
... but the few he had he knew well.
I told you not to waste your film.
Gus, check with Harry Pebbel.
He's drawing up the contracts.
- She's in it?
- Of course.
You mean you're gonna give her a part?
The part.
Georgia!
Mr. Shields,
you're a very stubborn man.
Very, when I'm right.
I know I'm right about you.
I gave you no help. The test was
atrocious, but it proved one thing.
When you're on the screen,
the audience is looking at you.
That's star quality...
...Lorrison quality.
Careful, Mr. Shields. You're looking
at me, but you see my father.
He gave me his name, but that's all.
Don't make a mistake.
Georgia...
...no more doomed daughter, no more
whimpering, no more drinking...
- And no more men?
- By and by.
Gus, pull yourself together!
I can't help it, Mr. Shields.
I'm a very emotional man.
The picture was to start in six weeks.
And six weeks seemed like forever.
Then, suddenly, with fittings,
hairdressing and makeup tests...
... five of them were gone.
I don't know what to do. The waist
has to be tight. The train, long...
Evelyn, will you tell me

what's worrying you?

Would you walk over there, please?

Now, turn.

Mr. Shields, I'm afraid Miss Lorrison can't carry a dress like this.

It takes an enormous amount of poise.

You have to walk like a grand duchess or hold yourself like Lilly Langtree.

Miss Lorrison will hold herself like Miss Lorrison.

Miss Lorrison happens to be an actress.

Make a wider turn, Georgia.

That's it.

Now, come over here.

You're all right.

Come here.

Sit down. Can you sit down?

- No.

- Perfect.

Everybody out now, please.

I wanna talk to my star.

- One week to go. Nervous?

- A little.

- Tired?

- Very.

You work very hard,

you're a good girl.

How good?

I'm sending you away.

Palm Springs for the rest of the week.

- Must I?

- Absolutely.

Till you're on set next week,

I want you to sleep...

...relax, and not think about a thing.

Not even you?

- You said no drinking.

- One drink.

To Georgia, my star.

- You said no men.

- So I did.

- We'd agreed.

- You agreed all by yourself.

- Don't put words in my mouth.
- Well, they sure come flapping out.
My pavilion for the garden party,
it was to be three feet off the ground.
That three feet will cost,
with charges and extra shooting time...
...\$25,000, more or less,
and with you, more.

I can't shoot without it.
I won't shoot without it.
I'm building an entire sequence
to that one moment.

- So move the camera up!
- I will not cheat the shot!
- That's not the way I function.
- I'm not asking you to change...

Jonathan!

I have something to show you.
This is wonderful.
You can't say that.
I have to look after the budget.
Look. My new car.
I don't care where you put the camera.
Put your camera there.

- A boom costs 150 dollars a day.
- We talked about that 3 weeks ago.
- Like to drive it around the block?
- I'm busy.
- As smooth a drive you'll never have.
- Gaucho, I'm busy.
- How long would a quick ride take?
- Gaucho, I'm busy.

You're always busy!

Why don't you live a little? Adis.

- 25,000, I wanna tell you this...
- No, it's 7-8000.

7-8000. I'm the one who's got to...

- I can't be shooting up their noses!
- Nobody's asking you to shoot up...

Gentlemen, there seems to be
an honest difference of opinion.

- We'll have to make a compromise.
- You bet.

The compromise, gentlemen, is this.

Harry, shut your penny-pinching
mouth and build him his platform!
The night before we started shooting,
I came back from Palm Springs.
I tried to sleep. I couldn't.
I don't know what drew me
to the empty stage.
I guess I was scared.
"To my new star, who will make me
very proud of her. Jonathan. "
It was cold on the set.
And suddenly, my throat was dry.
So dry I knew I had to have a drink.
The papers know,
but I asked them to lay off.
She'll burn up every column
in the country.
I wanted to do a picture with her, make
a star of someone this town discarded.
Cross her off. Let me contact
the agents and see who's available.
All right. Cast it and get it over with.
I'll tell Whitfield to shoot around the part.
- Sorry I'm late.
- Get out a release.
We're signing Anne Gavery
for the part tomorrow morning.
- The morgue gives me the jitters.
- Forget her.
I've covered everything:
Waterfront, jails, hospitals...
...scraped the Main Street booze parlors.
- I told you to forget her.
- I have professional pride.
I thought I knew every rathole in town.
She's found a new one, or she's left.
Janitor says she sometimes locks
her door and leaves for days at a time.
Where would I go for days at a time?
I try to put myself in her place...
Hello, Georgia.
You forgot...
...you forgot to tie your tie.
You're sorry, aren't you?

Should I wash your mouth with soap
and send you to bed without supper?

Why did you do it, Georgia?

Do you know why?

Why?

Because I was afraid

I'd louse things up for you...

...because I love you.

I do, you know.

It's cold sitting on the ground.

Georgia, come here.

Sit down.

Georgia, love is for the very young.

"For the very young." I like that.

Would you marry me, Jonathan?

Not even a little bit.

- That's too bad.

- Why?

Because I'd make you a good wife.

Well, right now I don't need a wife,

I need a star.

It's cold not sitting on the ground.

Let's go in by the fire, shall we?

We're signing Anne Gavery for the part.

- Oh? She'll be good.

- I think she will.

Why, that big ham, she couldn't...

Well, she...

Here.

Jonathan, if we were married,

I wouldn't take up much room.

Put those things on.

Your clothes will be dry soon.

- Hello.

- I've been trying to reach you.

- Oh, Harry...

- You have a picture in production.

- I know.

- We have to get a new star.

- Harry...

- Listen to me, and don't interrupt.

Jonathan, are you there?

- Hello. Hello.

- Harry, forget about Anne Gavery.

Have you gone crazy?
Are you drunk?
I said forget about her.
Georgia is right here.
Everything's fine. We'll use her.
I don't know what you've got
in your mind.
- You'll make a fool of yourself.
- I'll take that chance.
We'll see. I know.
Harry, listen to me...
Harry, shut up, and listen to me!
These are my instructions:
Georgia's in. We'll shoot in the morning.
- You call Whitfield and tell him.
- If I go to the bank, they'll laugh.
Everybody knows about this girl.
No studio will touch her...
Harry, shut up and listen to me.
Don't worry.
Everything's gonna be all right.
- I know just how to handle her now.
- You know how to handle her!
They're...
They're blue.
Blue is my, my lucky...
...color.
We were 14 weeks
shooting the picture.
The most wonderful 14 weeks
I'd ever known.
Change that line right there.
...see him. Up!
They'll throw pennies at us.
It's ridiculous.
This is a dramatic moment.
The guy you love is onstage.
You see him, and you know
somebody's gonna kill him.
If you're gonna joke about...
You're not taking this seriously.
I'll try once more, and that's all.
This mumbo jumbo
doesn't make any sense.

Try again. Make love
while you're lighting the cigarette.
Go ahead. Take it.
Light it.
Look up. That's it.
All the time thinking, thinking.
That's it.
That's a lot better.
Wasn't that much better?
Jonathan was a perfectionist.
When he loved a scene,
money meant nothing...
... fatigue even less,
his or anyone else's.
We did it over and over and over
till we could hardly stand.
- All right, cut. How was that?
- Try it again.
Jonathan! For heaven's sake!
Fun is fun!
- Did they get it?
- I don't know. They're still arguing.
Oh, brother!
This is amateur night in Dixie!
They'll make up their minds
or lose Baby.
- Hi, Baby.
- You were gonna get me into pictures.
It takes a little while, Baby.
I worked as an extra for three years.
- This is good experience.
- This is experience?
By the time I get a speaking part,
they'll have to carry me.
- You're pretty when you're mad.
- Thanks a lot.
Wrap it up!
Get these people outside!
Stage setup first thing in the morning!
- Good night, Miss Lorrison.
- Good night, George.
I thought that take was good.
Pretty good,
but I wanna get more out of Gaucho.

- Happy?
- Very.
- Are you, Jonathan?
- Very.
- May I buy you dinner tonight?
- And tomorrow night.
That's the look I want on that wedding scene. Can you give me that?
I'll try.
Mr. Shields, we're five over budget.
I need you to sign these sheets before I can send out the checks.
Good night.
Hurry up, Baby.
Be an angel, bring my car around.
S, seor. You want me to wash it for you too?
Georgia.
- You were wonderful in that scene.
- Thank you.
Every day I watch you grow more and more an actress.
To give truth to a performance, there's nothing like love.
- Love is for the very young.
- Love is for the birds!
- Good night, Georgia.
- Good night, Gaucho.
Lila, that wasn't nice!
I guess it depends on who a girl has dinner with.
Shh, Baby.
She gets to be a star,
I get to park a convertible.
Don't talk like that about Georgia, or Jonathan. He is a great man.
There are no great men, buster.
There's only men.
The last two weeks of the picture, I was in a dream...
... a bad dream.
All right, Jonathan!
Action!
- They're ready, Miss Lorrison.

- She'll be right there.
I don't know what to do.
I feel sick and frightened.
You're tired.
You've been trying so hard.
But they think I'm such a fool,
or temperamental...
It's only a few more days.
I feel like I'm gonna scream.
I can't help myself.
Hurry, Miss Lorrison.
Please, they're all waiting.
We were on the last scene.
We finished a little before dawn.
We're alone now.
And I can talk to you.
Now I can tell you
what I never could tell you before.
You must forgive me, my darling.
You mustn't mind my crying...
...now that it's too late.
Now, at last, I can tell you.
I love you, Gregory.
I love you. I love you so...
After the opening, there was a party.
It was a lovely top-of-the-world party.
It was my party,
and everybody was there.
And everybody made
a fuss over me. Everybody...
... but Jonathan.
You wouldn't come to my party,
so I brought my party to you.
Jonathan, it was so wonderful.
Everything you wanted for me.
Just as you promised.
They applauded, cheered,
oohed and aahed.
Georgia, go back and enjoy it.
But there's no one to enjoy it with.
Why, that's silly. Everybody in town
is fighting to be near the new star.
You know what I mean, Jonathan.
Georgia, I have to be alone tonight.

After a picture's done,
something happens.
It's a feeling of letdown, of emptiness.
It's bad. It gets worse.
I can't help it.
I know. Syd and Harry have told me
about that. But tonight...
I'd only depress you.
I want you to go back now.
- You've got bows to take. Take them!
- Darling.
I was afraid you might be angry
or resent my coming here...
...but I had to take that chance.
Right in the middle of everything,
suddenly I knew one thing so clearly.
The party is where you are:
Depressed or gay or angry...
...or tender or in any of your moods.
I know them all.
Let's have our party.
We've got so much to celebrate.
We'll ice the champagne.
We'll light the fire.
We'll put on the records and dance.
I'll help you pull yourself out of this
the way you helped me.
Give me that chance, darling?
Please?
Please don't shut me out.
Please.
You said you'd get rid of her quick.
Now, go back to your party.
The picture's finished, Georgia.
You're business, I'm company.
Shut up!
Shut up, and get back upstairs!
Oh, I forgot to tell you, Georgia.
I saw the picture.
I thought you were swell.
Good night, Georgia.
Stop looking like that.
Remember, I didn't ask you here.
You couldn't stay where you belong.

You couldn't enjoy
what I made possible for you.
You'd rather have this.
Well, congratulations.
You've got it all laid out for you...
...so you can wallow in self-pity.
A betrayed woman, the wounded doe,
with all the dribble that goes with it.
"He doesn't love me. He was lying.
Lovely moments, tender words.
He's lying. He's cheap and cruel!
That low woman Lila!"
Well, maybe I like Lilas.
Maybe I like to be cheap sometimes.
Maybe everybody does.
Or don't you remember?
Get that look off your face!
Who gave you the right to dig into me
and decide what I'm like?
How do you know
how I feel about you?
Maybe I don't want anybody
to own me, you or anybody. Get out!
Get out!
I told you I'd never work for
him again, and I never will.
I don't blame you, Georgia.
Jonathan certainly ruined you.
You were a drunk and a tramp playing
bit parts, and he made a star of you.
You had an ironclad contract
with Shields Productions.
Iron, I know, because I drew it myself.
Starting at \$100 a week,
we owned you body and soul.
The next morning you walked
right into this office.
That same look on your face as now,
and you threw the contract in my face.
Jonathan let you do with it.
I wanted to take you to court.
But he said no.
So you signed with ANL...
...and made them the millions

we should have made.
For the last seven years, you've been
in the top 10 in every popularity poll.
Yes, Jonathan sure fouled you up.
Jim, you're pretty happy
with yourself these days, aren't you?
You and your Poolutzer... Poolitzer.
"To James Lee Bartlow,
whose first book"...so and so...
..."graduate of Harvard
and the Sorbonne"...
"1949, professor of Medieval History
at a leading Southern university."
Summer is the quietest time of year
in a college town, and the loveliest.
I was outlining what I hoped
would be my second novel.
My first, on which I'd labored
seven years, was just out.
Surprisingly, for a scholarly work
about early Virginia...
... my book was enjoying
a brisk nationwide sale.
Possibly because it was
liberally peppered with sex...
... because, after all, early Virginia
was liberally peppered with sex.
Was that why Hollywood had bought it?
Why did I stay away from home
that afternoon?
Because Rosemary, my wife,
was entertaining the symposium...
... factory wives who met bimonthly...
... to enjoy a little culture
and a lot of gossip.
Rosemary was reading a paper
on the island of St. Daniels...
... which we visited the summer before.
"The techniques of courtship,
marriage and consummation.
These are the concern
of the anthropologist...
...rather than of the sociologist.
They are certainly

not for the drawing room.

The Longhorns:

Dating back to the misty past
of the first Spanish explorers..."
Her paper seemed
to be getting a good reception.
Possibly because it was
liberally peppered with sex...
... because, after all,
the island of St. Daniels...
... is liberally peppered with sex.
I started to work.
James Lee doesn't mind one bit.
Do you, darling?
He never minds.
Autograph, Miss Rosser?
Dear Miss Rosser,
isn't this just like a man?
I fixed his study with everything
an author could want...
...and there he sits
in a dreary old rocker...
...clickety-clack
on that dilapidated old portable.
I suppose we'll be losing you
to Hollywood now, Professor Bartlow.
The James Lee Bartlows in Hollywood,
isn't that a ridiculous idea?
Besides which, what could Hollywood
possibly offer us?
Besides which,
Hollywood hasn't asked us.
What did he write?
Oh, professor! You shouldn't have!
Ladies, look what Mr. Bartlow wrote!
James Lee, you have
a very naughty mind...
...I'm happy to say.
James Lee, no.
There are ladies out there. No...
I started to work.
Mrs. Bartlow says eat.
It'll do you good.

Thanks, Milly.

I started to work.

Hello.

Yes, this is Professor Bartlow.

Who?

Where?

Oh. Yes, put him on.

Hello, Mr. Shields.

Fine, thanks.

I heard on the extension.

Hollywood! Jonathan Shields.

Sure I'm glad you bought the book.

I hope your movie of it makes me
as happy as your check did.

No.

No, I'm sorry.

I don't see how I can.

Tell him you're working on
your new novel. Go on.

I need all summer
to work on my new book.

- Don't tell him what it's about.

- Get your hand away.

I'd rather not discuss it
until it's finished.

My, just listen to that man talk!

All expenses paid.

You just tell him you'll think it over.

No, it's impossible.

I can't come out now.

Say something charming
for goodbye.

- Goodbye, Mr. Shields.

- James Lee, that was not charming.

He has enough charm for all three of us.

- He surely rubbed you the wrong way.

- He surely did.

Darling...

...I don't want you to feel sorry
you didn't say yes to Mr. Shields.

What if we do spend the whole
hot summer here? It doesn't matter.

Someday, I know we'll get to travel
and see all those wonderful places.

So don't you ever feel one bit sorry
you didn't say yes, James Lee.

Does a trip to Hollywood
mean that much to you?

Me?!

After all, it was only for two weeks,
all expenses paid.

It's not like Mr. Shields
wanted me to write a screenplay.

All he wanted was to talk,
to get my ideas on his ideas.

- Is this everything?

- Yeah, that's all.

Mrs. Bartlow, is this bungalow
all right with you?

- It's completely enchanting!

- Good.

- The studio car is yours for the stay.

- Thank you.

I have to meet a guy from the syndicate.

He's a nice guy,

but he hated our last two pictures.

- Bye.

- When do I see the great man?

Jonathan? Drop around the studio
tomorrow. Not too early, not too late.

Bye, Mrs. Bartlow.

James Lee, come here.

Hurry up.

Hurry up!

Come on.

It's Georgia Lorrison...

...living in the very next bungalow.

Now, what do you know?

That night Rosemary

wrote 32 postcards.

Next morning I mailed them,

and we went to the studio.

Look here, James Lee.

The dining room at Round Oak...

...just the way we saw it

when you wrote it.

Just the way I saw it when I read it.

Look at that chandelier.

- It's Waterford, isn't it?

- Yes, it is.

You write in motion-picture terms.

You like movies?

- The good ones.

- Would you like to write the script?

- No.

- Why not?

You look much younger than I thought.

- Must take good care of yourself.

- I do.

So do I. I'm here for two weeks only.

Get your money's worth out of that.

There's never been such silver,
not even in Richmond.

I wouldn't have missed this for anything.

Mr. Shields, James Lee didn't think
it proper for me to come along today.

The professor's a man of rigid ideas.

We're delighted to have you with us.

See, darling. I knew it was plain
sociable for me to come and say hello.

Don't worry, Mr. Shields.

I won't be a nuisance.

When James Lee is busy with you,

I'll be busy with my own work.

- What kind of work is that?

- It's nothing, really.

But I did promise the symposium

I'd do a paper on Hollywood.

I realize in two weeks I can't do more
than barely scratch the surface.

Get the feel of things,
and then we'll get together.

- Shall I phone you?

- No, let me phone you.

Thank you, Mr. Shields.

It was wonderful fun.

I like being an author's wife.

It took time to learn the secret:

His work comes first.

- Visit us again.

- Thank you. Goodbye.

"His work comes first."

She would buy dark glasses
with his first salary check.
No wonder it took him seven years
to write a book.
Do you have to have him
to write your script?
Do you think you can keep him
in Hollywood?
He kept me, all right. Two weeks later
I signed with Shields Productions...
... to write a treatment of
The Proud Land.
- So you like my ideas?
- Yes.
- All of them?
- No.
- Who is that? His picture is all over.
- That's my father.
Angry little man, wasn't he?
I'm not used to an office. I'm
used to a portable and a soft rocker.
- Superstitious mind?
- No.
Supersensitive rear.
I had them flown out.
I thought it'd make you happy.
- I gather I failed.
- You were pretty sure of yourself.
- Pretty sure I'd stay.
- Yes, I was.
I know the legend. Jonathan Shields...
...the man will do anything
to get what he wants.
Thanks.
Shields Pictures Incorporated.
Well, I'm flattered you want me
and bitter you got me.
Where do I start?
Just read these scripts.
See how it's done.
Rough out a storyline,
and then we'll get to work.
Don't worry.
Some great movies...

...are made by people
who hate each other.
- Then we should make a great movie.
- I usually do.
What about your last two?
I liked them.
I started to work.
Look!
How do you like it?
I'll be right down.
I started to work.
Hello.
What is it, Rosemary?
But, dear, I told you I can't.
I know it's Sunday, but I've only
written half a page all week.
All right, Rosemary.
Where is it?
Yes.
And?
Not so fast.
Walking out that way.
You were rude.
I don't care how you feel about Shields...
...if you are a gentleman, there is
no justification for boorishness!
He asked me how my work was going.
What was I supposed to say? Great?
Who was that overgrown bullfighter
you danced with?
You mean Victor Ribera? Gaucho?
Why, I only danced with him twice.
- An hour each time.
- You do get nasty when you're jealous.
Like the time you carried on
in St. Daniels...
...over that charming
young governor's aide.
- He was too charming.
- He meant nothing at all!
You were even jealous
at that Swiss exchange professor...
...just because he was polite!
He was too polite.

Rosemary, let's get some sleep.
James Lee Bartlow, take a good look
at yourself in that mirror.
You've changed
since you've come to Hollywood...
...and I don't mind telling you,
it's no change for the better.
Have I changed too?
I dare say I am getting
a little too big for my breeches.
They're pretty breeches.
James Lee, you have
a very naughty mind...
...I'm happy to say.
Get me Gaucho.
Harry?
Oh, call Arrowhead.
Long distance, please.
Lake Arrowhead, California.
I'm going up the lake with James Lee.
We'll get this treatment written.
- When are you leaving?
- In an hour.
- The bank wants to talk to you.
- Tell them I said you could do it.
- They're getting tough.
- You're getting too old.
You got something there.
Hello, Gaucho?
Just a minute.
- Harry, you take care of it, will you?
- All right, I'll see what I can do.
Gaucho. Qu tal?
Muy bien.
How are you booked for social life?
Well, get yourself unbooked.
How would you like to squire
a genuine Virginia dame?
I said "squire."
Mrs. James Lee Bartlow.
Mister is going up the lake with me.
IKKeep her occupied, Gaucho,
so she doesn't get in our hair.
I started to work.

I worked all day from 7:00 till noon,

from 2:

There were no interruptions.

In the evenings,

we worked together.

Jonathan, that's my best scene!

You've cut it down to three lines!

Look, Jonathan,

I don't think you understand.

The boy's going away, probably to be
killed! So when the mother speaks...

She doesn't speak.

We move the camera in close.

She opens her mouth,

but is too emotional to speak.

What she feels

we let the audience imagine.

They'll imagine it better than any
words you and I could write.

All right with you?

Yes, professor.

Now for that last scene.

- Proud of yourself?

- A little.

Should be. Not a weak scene
in the whole treatment.

I'm proud of Rosemary too.

She didn't interrupt the whole time.

Pleasant, wasn't it?

To tell you the truth,

I missed her interruptions.

Even when she's a bother, she does it
in a gay, naive, Southern belle way.

Why didn't you try to put her
on paper as a woman in your book?

- I did try.

- Just wouldn't write?

Funny.

Maybe you just don't know her
well enough.

Check the radiator too.

What's her story?

Gaicho a friend of his?

Was she gonna marry Gaucho?
Were they flying
for a Mexican divorce?
- How long did she love him?
- When did he last see her?
He was a close friend of the Bartlows.
They were flying to the lake.
- His flight plan said Acapulco.
- What flight plan?
Don't you wanna play with the press?
Gaucho was a friend of the Bartlows.
He was flying her to the lake...
- Let Mr. Bartlow identify the body.
- Just a minute...
- Will you shut up!
- You stay out of it...
I wish... I wish an awful lot.
Maybe if I'd been here...
You didn't know about them, did you?
Sorry, Jonathan.
Of course, you didn't know.
Look, Jim, I'm not gonna let you
brood about her.
She's dead, and you're alive.
You can't do anything about it.
Neither can I.
Let's get to work, you and I.
Without Jonathan, I don't know what
I'd have done those next few months.
He put me to work
and kept me working.
When the shooting script
was finished...
... he asked me to stay
for production meetings and casting.
You see Miss Ronley
as the star of The Proud Land.
But it was my impression
this was a woman of sex.
Miss Ronley has
the sex appeal of an angleworm.
- How about that, Jonathan?
- About what?
I like Linda Ronley.

- I wonder...
- Yes, Jim?
- It's not my department.
- Go ahead. You're among friends.
While writing the script,
I had one girl in mind.
She lives next to my bungalow.
I think she'd be fine.
Georgia Lorrison.
If you'd like me to give
her the script, I...
You have just broken a sacred taboo.
You've mentioned the unmentionable.
- That's enough.
- That's all right, Syd.
Georgia is the best.
The best actress. The best box office.
Her last three pictures
for Fred Amiel grossed to... Harry?
\$ 7,600,000 domestic.
We try to get her, we'll be wasting
our time. She hates my guts.
Jim, if you wanna show her the script,
there's no way I can stop you.
What am I supposed to do?
Thank you for saying no?
What are you trying to do? Fight
Jonathan Shields' battles for him?
- It happens to be my book.
- It happens to be his picture.
You're the first one I know to begin
by hating him and end up liking him.
- Do you always work backwards?
- Do you still love him?
- Excuse me.
- Fred, do I still love Jonathan?
- No, you don't get me on that one.
- A stupid question for a writer.
Don't you know about first love?
You may grow out of it,
but you don't get over it.
I'm sorry, that was stupid of me.
No, no. I wouldn't want to get over
my first love either, quite.

Well, it's time you two met.
Fred Amiel, James Bartlow.
Guess who we were fighting about.
Jonathan's more than a man.
He's a habit-forming experience.
If they bottled him, he'd outsell ginger ale.
- Ready, Mr. Amiel?
- No, thanks, Timmy.
Georgia let me read your script,
it's a beautiful job.
I'd like to talk about your next one.
Goodbye, Georgia.
Nice to have met you.
Shooting started on The Proud Land
and everything went well...
... until the fourth day,
then something happened.
Cut!
Close-up of the girl.
About there.
Save all...
Mr. Von Ellstein!
Would you come here, please?
Am I to understand
you consider this scene complete?
- I do.
- I don't. You call that directing?
I have for 32 years.
I see values and dimensions
you haven't begun to hit!
Perhaps not the ones I wish to hit.
I could make this scene a climax.
I could make every scene a climax.
If I did, I would be a bad director.
I like to think of myself
as one of the best.
A picture all climaxes is a necklace
without a string, it falls apart.
You must build to your big moment.
Sometimes you must build slowly.
If I want a lecture on the aesthetics
of motion pictures, I'll ask.
It won't be a cover-up for a shallow,
inept interpretation of a great scene!

- To be a director you need imagination.

- Whose imagination?

Yours or mine?

There's only one answer. You see
this picture one way and I another.

It could be done your way,
but not by me...

...and not by any other director
who respects himself.

You know what you must do
to have it exactly as you want it?
You must direct this picture yourself.

To direct a picture,
a man needs humility.

Do you have humility, Mr. Shields?

Jonathan the director
was a new Jonathan.

He was patience personified.

He was tolerant, even-tempered,
considerate and indulgent...

... to his crew, his cast and his writer.

Six months after he started shooting...

... we saw the picture
for the first time.

- Nice job at cutting, Tom.

- Thank you, Mr. Shields.

- Nice work, Tom.

- Thanks.

- Beautiful production.

- Beautifully written, Jim.

- Beautifully produced.

- Chapman's photography was perfect.

Congratulate Walter on his sets,
Lucien on her costumes...

...and Boris on his score.

- I liked the music.

Tell the director to have
his head examined.

He should've shot himself,
not the picture.

- It's not as bad as all that...

- I butchered it.

Von Ellstein should have been here.

He would have enjoyed this.

I have no tension, no timing,
no pace, nothing.
I took a beautiful, sensitive story...
...and turned it
into a turgid, boring movie.
If it were anyone else,
I'd never release it.
- Who's got a cigarette?
- Here you are.
I've made pictures that lost money,
but they had something.
- This is nothing.
- You're being drastic.
All you've got to do is cut
the dead wood out...
Please.
- Harry, shelve the picture.
- Are you crazy? We can't do that.
We're in hock up to our necks.
We went way over budget.
- We've got to release it.
- There's your penny-pinching mind.
Shelve it.
We shelve it,
that's the end of Shields Productions.
Goodbye to 17 years' work.
Goodbye to every dime you've got.
- How about the money in the sock?
- There isn't any sock.
Your last two pictures
and this one took care of that.
And every dime of mine is gone
and every dime of Syd's.
That I didn't know.
The banks turned us down
on money for the last retakes.
Syd and I... Oh, well.
You were shooting,
and who could bother you then?
The hardheaded businessman.
The hardboiled press agent.
I won't release a picture
that I know is bad.
But other men do!

Their pictures don't say

"Jonathan Shields presents."

- Okay, what story shall I break?

- That's easy.

"Jonathan Shields Lays an Egg!"

- What you gonna do now?

- I'm tired, Jim.

- What are you gonna do now?

- You mind changing the subject?

I just played my big scene in there:

The Great Man Fails.

You want an encore?

- You sound like Sebastian.

- Who? Oh, your new book.

You told me to never let a leading character feel sorry for himself.

- Not for long.

- I was wrong.

It's very comforting

to feel sorry for yourself.

- You're coming with me.

- What?

I've taken a cabin at Tahoe to finish my new book. You're coming along.

- Why?

- Why not?

Besides, I work better when you're around.

Can you wait a while?

- How long?

- Five minutes.

It'll take me that long to pack.

Sebastian sounds like some character.

You'll have trouble casting him.

- This is a book, not a movie.

- You'll sell it to pictures.

Gaicho could have done that part.

He was Sebastian.

The guy with the world on a string.

The big happy baboon.

I begged him, "Don't take that plane, Gaicho." But no, not him. He...

Today is my day for mistakes.

Jim...

...I didn't kill Rosemary.
Gaucho didn't kill her.
She killed herself.
Whether you like it or not,
you're better off.
She was a fool. She got in your way.
She interfered with your work.
She wasted your time.
She wasted you.
You're better off without her!
"A sensitive, unforgettable portrait
of a present-day Southern belle.
Gay and foolish, naive, shrewd,
and heartbreaking all at once."
Yes, Jim,
Jonathan sure destroyed you.
You came out of it with nothing.
Nothing but a Pulitzer Prize novel...
...and the highest salary
of any writer in Hollywood.
Look, folks,
you've got to give the devil his due.
We all owe him something,
and you've had years to think it over.
- What do you owe him, Harry?
- Plenty.
All the times he told me
to shut my penny-pinching mouth.
To Jonathan I was always
just an overpaid bookkeeper.
But without him I probably would still
be putting costumes on cat men.
You know, when they list
the 10 best pictures ever made...
...there are always
two or three of his on the list.
And I was with him when he made them.
Excuse me.
- Yes?
- Your call from Paris is ready.
Hello!
Hello. Yes, Jonathan.
I can hear perfectly.
Yes, they're here, all three of them.

All right, I'll ask them.

Jonathan wants to know:

Will you help him get started again?

Will you work with him just this once?

Will you do this picture with him?

Georgia?

Sorry, Jonathan.

No, I can't.

I'm sorry, Jonathan.

They're gone.

I'm sure it's a great idea, but, Jonathan...

...this costs \$4.80 a minute.

Don't tell me your idea,

write me. Jonathan, please...

Yeah. Yeah...