













THE AUTHORS' HAND-BOOK SERIES

# THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

A COMPLETE AND CONSTRUCTIVE TREAT-  
MENT OF THE PHOTODRAMA'S MOST  
PROFITABLE AND MOST PERMA-  
NENT FORM

From Beginning to End

A PRACTICAL TREATISE

Together with New-Method Casts, a Seven-Part  
Synopsis and Portions of Working  
Scenarios

Interpolated with Copious Examples and Arranged  
with a View to Its Use as a Text-Book  
for Individual or Class Room  
Study

By

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## INTRODUCTION

**D**URING my ten years of daily print contact with the ever-growing motion-picture world, several facts have been poignantly outstanding.

The foremost of these facts has been an insatiable hunger for motion-picture knowledge. A department has been maintained by demand from the first issue of my publications, known as "The Answer Man." No fact is too small, no detail too trivial, no incident too personal, for the inquisitiveness of motion-picture "fans."

But there have been many serious inquiries as well. One of the most persistent of these has been, "What is a Photoplay?" On first thought, an adequate answer seems obvious. Why, a Photoplay is— is— We can, and have, answered it in a dozen or more ways. But the answers were never broad comprehensive, nor profound enough. To define the Photoplay in a word or two, is like trying to girt the earth with a tape-measure.

It is because this Photoplay is such a great and wonderful subject, that defies a brief or a hasty definition, that it has become the great medium of universal entertainment.

And this persistent question is being asked just as much in studios everywhere today: What is a Photoplay? There are nods, there are shakes of

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the head, there are grave replies and flippant responses—but there is also a wide awaking to the fact that one is not quite so sure after all just exactly what is the nature of this Eighth Wonder of the world. A dozen people will give you a dozen answers—all different.

There have been many books written about the screen in general, and there have been scores written telling aspirants How to Write Photoplays. But I do not know one that has even approached the text that follows this Introduction, in delving into the darkest depths of Photodrama and emerging triumphant with a clear, concise, yet well-rounded, answer to the baffling question—which I have often found myself repeating—What is a Photoplay?

But this text offers a rare additional service, which cannot go unappreciated, for it tells How to Write a Photoplay!

EUGENE V. BREWSTER



*A Picture is one thing, Drama another; one is the still re-presentation of an Image that was in the mind of an Artist, the other is the living presentation of an Emotion that is in the heart of an Audience.*

## FOREWORD

SEVERAL years have elapsed since the publication of my first book on the cinema art—"The Photodrama." These have been years of sunshine and harvest. All that I had dared to dream of the newest Art has been justified by an occasional glimpse of new buds of promise that have contained some of the imperishable grandeur of the perfect flower.

The Spectacle of "Intolerance" will never fade from the human vision that has once glimpsed it. Therein millions of spectators sensed the bigness of their own little-esteemed souls as they peered back a thousand years through the ten-acre sweep of a great genius's vision ensnared on a mite of a screen.

The greatest canvas painted by the greatest artist never gave us half the breath-taking perspective of some of those scenes of "Intolerance." The greatest dramatic Spectacle

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or Pageant ever before staged never put half so many people in action. Fiction only attempts to stimulate the imagination by suggesting the presence of such great numbers of people spread over such a great area.

Thus we find three of the greatest of the Fine Arts would be beggared in trying to furnish a vision similar to that to be found in a single expression of a single phase of the Art of the Photodrama.

But we find something in this newest of the Arts that none other of the Fine Arts has; that is, the *animated deed*—the verisimilitude of Life itself!

It is no less idle to contend that the Photodrama will usurp the spheres of other mediums of artistic expression, than it is to insist that the Photodrama is ephemeral and but the whim of a restless public.

The Arts are eternal verities; and because we have lived to see the miracle of a new medium of artistic expression emerge from the brain of science, like a latter-day Athena, there is no reason to conclude, like the yokel who gazed for the first time on the unbelievable lines of the camel, that it is "Impossible! There is no such animal!"

The painted canvas is one thing; the animated screen another. The *expression* of the

## FOREWORD

technical artist in fashioning either of them to produce even a similar *impression* on a spectator, is as different as night from day. One has the glory of the sun—take your choice—another the glory of the moon, and still others have the glory of the stars. Let us thank heaven for the number and range of the Fine Arts.

We have lived, then, to see not only the birth of a new Art, but also its day of acclamation. We are privileged to be contemporaneous with the arrival of a new medium for the expression of the infinite. We may now see with our eyes the eternal, living vision just as it was created in the soul of Man-With-A-Message.

Let him who doubts the birth of a new Art, stand outside the cinema theaters of the world, at noon, at dusk, or at night, and try to count—if he can during the years of his life—the millions that enter in the span of a single day!

If he still doubts, let him enter one of the lowliest of these temples of the new Art. In that single shrine he will find sufficient emotion released to shatter the soul of the strongest man God has created, if it were housed in a single breast. And if he still doubts, let him witness "Civilization," "The

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Birth of a Nation," "The Barrier"—any one of them. Let him count the tears that fall, if he can. Then let him stand up and if he dares declare, "This is all fol-de-rol!"

And if he still doubts—and there are those who do—he is a fool. For that which daily can move a million to laugh and cry is, verily, nothing short of a Fine Art.

A strange paradox has risen, however, in that the small number of possible doubters are not always to be found among the vast audience that daily witness the new Drama, but among the manufacturers who make it possible to produce the Photodrama.

There seems to be a doubt of the classification of the cinema Art. Is it a matter of progressive Pictures or one of cumulative Drama, that is the question?

Thus we find producers who are subordinating the principle of Drama to the practice of employing fine Pictures. The idea seems to be that an unbroken series of pleasing Pictures are more essential than a chain of gripping situations that may have nothing scenically pleasing about them. Scenes are only a means to our dramatic end.

That a director has at his command a splendid estate that may be photographed, or an actress a dozen handsome gowns spoiling

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to be worn, or an actor a fine riding horse that needs exercising, or the studio a ballroom set all ready for a glittering dance, are quite aside from the question of putting on a play the dramatic action of which calls for scenes laid exclusively among the po' whites in the mountains of Kentucky. Many an enterprising producer is prone to the temptation of subverting his Drama to meet the employment of his immediate Scenic Equipment.

Thus do we witness many a fine dramatic idea that has been garbled to afford a vehicle for the scenery and settings at hand. One company used to have a menagerie that was continually eating its head off unless the wild beasts could appear daily—which they did in the most amazing places. Several other companies have expensive screen children who are forced upon parents who were never dramatically constituted to have children.

Beautiful Pictures on the screen are only animated photographs, unless they enhance the dramatic atmosphere, suspense or climax. Appropriate beauty is always a desirable attribute of Art.

Next we have the sensational Pictures in which the thrilling sensation is supposed to take the place of the Dramatic Situation. For instance, an entire passenger train is run

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into an open draw-bridge in order that the villain may wreak vengeance on the hero. Hundreds of innocent passengers are scenically destroyed—but the hero is rescued! Thus we prove that the scene was devised as a scenic sensation and not as a dramatic contingency at all.

On the other hand, it would have been highly dramatic for the villain to set out to kill our hero and to meet with some accident that imperils his life and then to be rescued by a man at the risk of his life—who turns out to be our hero!

It is not beyond the imagination of a child to conceive the aforesaid railroad wreck; in fact, this is the child's way of obtaining effects. The Dramatic Situation is not so easy and demands the knowledge, execution and foresight of the Artist. The one calls for the risk of both life and property; the other, an exercise of simple histrionic talent. The one calls for a Spectacle, a mob, fury, a blare of trumpets; the other needs only a Keynote Scene, two people, the gentlest of emotions, the fading notes of a piano.

Finally, in the Spectacle, or the multiple-reel Super-Feature Play, we have been wont to find all of the aforementioned defects. Glaring emphasis has been laid on *Picture*

## FOREWORD

and sensationalism; little thought or anxiety has been spent on Dramatic cohesion and effect.

Never has such a Spectacle been devised as "Intolerance." Yet that marvelous series of pictures reveals to us Mr. Griffith's shortcoming—of which like so many other director-geniuses he does not seem to have been aware—namely, his want of sheer Dramatic cohesion. Mr. Griffith sadly needs a collaborator. Yoke with him a dramatist of the first rank and the two could make the artistic world tremble.

There is no reason, then, why the Super Motion Picture, the sensational Picture, and the Spectacle Picture may not eventually become welded into the fabric of the Feature Photoplay. While there are today a few companies only that realize the distinction between Pictures and Photoplays, it is to be hoped that all will soon come to feel the shortcomings of the former and seriously strive to attain the latter's degree of perfection.

In the hope of making that distinction clear in the minds of those who seek the information and knowledge, I am writing this, the first book to appear dealing with the construction and contradistinctions of The Feature Photoplay.

HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS.





I  
THEORY



# THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

*Whether or not a given product shall be deemed a Feature is left to the Producer to decide; that it be first and last a Play is the only concern of the Writer.*

## CHAPTER I

### THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

EVOLUTION; VIEWPOINTS OF AUDIENCE, PRODUCER AND WRITER; THE EXHIBITOR'S PROBLEM; TYPES AND DURATION; ESSENTIALS.

**T**ODAY and forever all those concerned in the making of photoplays may well say, "The world is ours!"

This is the mere statement of a commonly accepted fact. Two powerful conditions, fortunately, govern that possessive pronoun "ours"; namely, Business prowess and Artistic merit. These conditions impose competition, which is the commercial prescription for a healthy life.

The survival of the fittest has always seemed a cruel law to the unfit and the unfit-

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

ted, who in consequence are ejected from the high places they may have usurped by reason of their brilliant audacity. What really happens is, that that slow acting creature, the Intelligent Public, rebels when it realizes that the Industry is being belittled by its products, or the Art is being outraged by its interpreters.

The world-wide audience of the Photodrama has come to comprehend its infinite capacity for entertainment and now recognizes its claim to a niche among the Fine Arts. With this recognition comes the intermittent demand of the multitude that the constructive parts of the produced Photoplay be equal to the artistic whole of the Photodrama.

Cinematography occupied nearly twenty years in passing from the dark confines of a mere mechanical curiosity to the dazzling heights of a new and permanent Art.

The mechanical phenomenon of animated photographs was destined to be short-lived as a form of entertainment. Curiosity alone prompted the expenditure of the required admission fee, and that curiosity was forever satiated by the murky presentment of some person or object in some commonplace motion on which most of the audience would not waste its attention, in actual life.

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It took several years for the Cinema to progress from the simulation of mere motion to the imitation of Real Life. It was still mechanics, but the new element attracted a new audience. Several years again passed before episodes of pursuit, peril, and comic sequence began to appear. Curiosity had been supplanted by sensation. More than half the world loves a sensation when it can get it, and most of these became acquainted with sensation in the well-named "moving" pictures.

Another long period of experimentation, and suddenly the imitation of life in general, was merged into the portrayal of a single life, or group of lives, in particular. Pictures grew into *stories!* A miracle had happened. Curiosity had been whetted, senses thrilled, to be sure. But now—greater by far than either of these phenomena—*the emotions were stirred.*

Exactly what happened from now on does not concern us so much, for that is mere history. What we students are seeking is enlightening psychology. For we must have recognized some analogy, in the groping progress of Photoplay evolution, to the revealing of the spark of our own talent that glimmered through the years of our mechanical periods

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

of endeavor. Once within sight of the divine fire, however, then we know that our tiny spark is nothing less, and our steadfast aim shall be to lift our spark of true inspiration into an intense, mighty conflagration of perfect effort.

And so it is with Photoplay production. Now that we have arrived at a stage in its psychology where we catch an occasional glimpse of its dramatic potentiality and its pictorial possibility, our audiences will not remain contented with any exhibition that is totally devoid of artistic value.

It has become necessary at this point of the Cinema's development to turn from its mechanical organization to its artistic organism. In the mere fact that the emotions of miscellaneous groups of people had been stirred again and again, lay amazing possibilities. In the Cinema's emotional appeal alone its artistic leanings might have been vaguely sensed though its depth of feeling, ultimate breadth of appeal, and heights of magnificence were as yet unknown quantities.

In the early analyses of the nature of the entertaining qualities of cinema presentation, an error crept in that has been a common stumbling block ever since. The aforesaid error grew out of the misconception that

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

Moving Picture presentation was nothing more or less than a new and artistic rendering of other Arts, or semi-arts, of long established reputation.

(EXAMPLE I.) *We saw repeated efforts to reproduce, almost verbatim, the Novel ("Tess of the D'Urbervilles"); the Short Story (O. Henry's); the Poem ("The Children's Hour"); the Song ("After The Ball"); the Drama ("Arizona"); Pantomime (the majority of early efforts were nothing more); Vaudeville (Charlie Chaplin, in "One A. M." particularly); Slap-Stick (Keystone Comedy); Extravaganza ("Wizard of Oz"); Spectacle ("Cabiria"); the Circus ("When The Circus Broke Loose"); History ("Joan The Woman");—with what lack of gratification to the audience the reader is left to judge.*

Re-presentation at its best is only imitation. An imitation may be artistic to an esthetic degree, but it is never Art. Art implies *creation, originality, effective presentation.* By creation, we do not mean the creation of an Idea; that is impossible, once we form our Ideas from concepts that rush into our minds. Art does demand, however, the creation of a *unique medium* for the expression of Ideas (the older and more universal the Ideas are, the better) in terms or symbols of emotional understanding. Art demands a treatment that conforms to the high standards of its specific mediums and an original Develop-

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

ment of a subject-matter, on the part of the Artist, that is *inspired*. Art demands of both its craftsmen and their selection and treatment of subject-matter that they conform with those exigencies of expression that govern a given medium and contribute to its effective presentation

To appreciate a work of Art, one needs to be endowed only with a sympathetic heart brought into service through an intelligent mind. To build a work of Art, or to essay sound criticism of such, one must be gifted with a fine feeling for Beauty plus a practical knowledge of the mechanics essential to giving it effective expression. A knowledge of its Technique is a prerequisite to the comprehension of a given form of Art.

Technique is governed by rules that restrain the untutored mind. Art is guided by laws that liberate the refined emotions.

Not until Photoplay producers—editors, directors, governing boards and proprietors; actors and playwrights—come to a full comprehension of the nature, construction, and limitations of the new form of Art expression, may we expect it to take its rightful place among the Fine Arts.

For Photodrama is a distinct form of artistic expression as essentially different in its



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construction and expression from other forms, as existing forms differ from each other.

*(EXAMPLE 2.) Take the Famous Players Company. This company had for its raison d'être rich treasures in stage plays collected for several decades by the most astute and successful producer our stage has known. "Famous Players interpreting Famous Playwrights," was its slogan. Moving pictures were to ascend to their sublime destiny without delay! What really happened was nothing at all. Several stage plays were reproduced with results more flat than flattering. Soon the same company sent forth a piercing cry for material that would be adaptable to the screen.*

Accepting Photodrama, then, as an individual Art, we will consider the problems that led to the creation of the Feature Photoplay as their solution.

Just as the first crude attempts to create material for the screen came from the mechanics of the film manufactories, so did the first blind steps to dictate the length of the plays come from the merchants at the box offices.

Artistic temperament chafes under the restraint of the horny hand of trade, but it is usually this same rough hand that makes the impractical dream of the Artist an everyday Art for the people. Manufacturers had ush-

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ered an Art into being and exhibitors had brought together audiences eager to see its presentation. It was left to the play-makers to study and standardize the new Art, to master its potential and esthetic moods, and finally to meet and blend both the peculiar limitations of production with the world-wide boundaries of presentation.

The human audience is much the same the world over. It must first appreciate the entertainment it is being offered. If that entertainment is good, the audience should enjoy it. Yet every audience has its limitation of enjoying its favorite entertainment. That limitation being reached, any play will begin to pall.

As the quality of Cinema production improved and Pictures began to grow into Plays, it was evident that audiences would not only acquiesce to longer productions, but that they actually relished them. They were gradually given as much as they could stand, until today every audience in the world would clamor for the longer play if it were taken away from them.

*(EXAMPLE 3.) Primitive exhibits began with short strips of film upon which any animated objects were jerkily seen to move (a flag waving, etc.) Then followed 200-foot subjects wherein a definite*

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*movement was carried out from beginning to end (a horse race). Followed 600 to 1,000 feet as the reel became a standard of measurement (human-interest began its development through exploits). The split-reel began to fill a current need (story-interest became timidly apparent in half-reel lengths that were supplemented by educational subjects to fill out the reel). Story interest supplanted all other "entertainment" motives (the one-reel play became a standard length). Two-reel subjects were essayed (one reel of which generally consisted of the inevitable "chase"). With the advent of the three-reelers, the craze for the Spectacle began that seems likely to crop up periodically (spectacles zigzagged between 6-, 8-, and even 12-reel offerings. Into the midst of these vague gropings-about for an effective, comfortable, and perfect form of picture-story expression that would fit the manufacturers' reel-standardization, that would satisfy the commercial problems of the exhibitors, and that would gratify the audiences because of its pleasing, length, and form, the 5-reel Photoplay sprang into immediate popularity.*

The pioneer exhibitor had constantly sought something about the numerous short plays that would stand out as a special "feature." He had to choose either a bill composed entirely of short subjects or of a single elephantine spectacle—if indeed his contract permitted any choice in the matter at all.

The 5-reel, or Feature Photoplay, as we shall term it hereafter, fortunately made its

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bid for favor at a time when exhibitors began to enjoy a more liberal and independent service by the breaking up of the existing monopoly among the manufacturers. They saw at once that they could retain their short pictures, musical offerings, and what not, but furthermore they could offer in addition a 5-reeler as a special feature.

Now we have arrived at a point where we may intelligently examine and discuss The Feature Photoplay.

*Standard Form is not an arbitrary Detail of a passing Mood, but a composite Assemblage of all that has proved effective in past Expression.*

## CHAPTER II

DIVIDING THE PLAY INTO PARTS—AND WHY  
COMPARISONS; THE PLAY OF THE HOUR; PRE-  
CEDENTS; MECHANICAL HARMONY; PSYCHOL-  
OGY OF INTEREST.

JUST as variety is said to be the spice of life, so is variation the secret of continued attention. As huge solid bodies repel physical effort, so does any unbroken mass weary the human powers of interest. All forms of genuine entertainment are therefore subject to the laws of esthetic fragmentation.

(EXAMPLE 4.) *Music has its rhythm, recurring motif, and refrain; Literature has its sentence, paragraph and chapter; Poetry has its meter, verse, and stanza; Drama has its lines, scenes, and acts.*

A book without punctuation, paragraphs, or even chapters would be an appalling tome despite the most alluring contents. A stage play of an hour or more, presented in continuous sequence without regard to acts, or crises, curtains or scenes, would fail to gratify.

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Yet the primitive days of all Arts saw them making their first appeal in massive inarticulateness that at length became divided into harmonious Parts, just as the sculptor begins with a crude piece of stone and ends with a perfect human counterpart so cunningly *subdivided as to make a convincing whole*.

The Feature Photoplay is subject to the same law of limited consecutive attention and prolonged interest. Its mile of film, composed of 14,000 "frames" and divided into 200 to 600 Scenes, corresponds to a book, for example, of 14,000 words (or frames), and punctuated with 200 to 600 Scenes. Call the Captions paragraphs and the Inserts extra punctuations, if you will. We still have, however, the equivalent of the Novel without chapter divisions.

Sentences, paragraphs, and punctuation are after all concerned more with the intrinsic unities of the matter of which a composition is made up, than with the esthetic harmony of the emotions on which the appeal depends. Any technical device that deepens the emotional appeal and adds to the esthetic value of an Art-work, automatically becomes an essential to its Art-life.

With its 5,000 feet of film, its multitudinous Scenes, its connecting Captions, and its

## PART-DIVISIONS, AND WHY

dividing Inserts, the Feature Photoplay still lacks the most potential device at its command for obtaining dramatic effects; namely, a further division into larger units, or Parts, that is in many ways like that employed in the construction of Acts in the Stage Play. It is the division into Acts that makes the Stage Play the delightful vehicle it has become, just as it is the division of the book into Chapters that so greatly adds to the pleasure of reading it. The same technique applied to the construction of the Feature Photoplay, wherein the Part is made an effective device, will be a long step toward the up-building of a perfect Photodrama.

On first thought, the conscious dividing of the Feature Photoplay into concrete Parts, may strike one as inviting an unnecessary artificiality. Second thought will disclose that Art in general, and the Art of the Photodrama in particular, is an artificial design from beginning to end, simulating Life through the stimulation of Vision. Every process, small or large, is an artificial device seeking out the approval and the co-operation of the mind and the emotions of man-alive. The progressive writer is ever seeking new means to his end of heightening effects that will induce greater reality.

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

Accepting our medium—the Photodrama—as an Art, any device employed in its expression should meet two tests. The first is the esthetic, or the test of Beauty; the second is Power, or the test of appeal. One concerns the effect on the mind, the other the effect on the emotions.

Let us take the first. It is commonly called “form,” or good form. No work, or achievement, is perfect that is not in good form. Good form implies symmetry. Symmetry means balance. But it does not mean mathematical balance, with precisely two and two on either side of each equation. While the whole of Art is equal to the sum of all its parts, just as Mathematics is, it arrives at its equations in a less hackneyed, though none the less absolute, manner. Art’s progress in symmetry is measured by cycles, recurrence, and periodicity.

*(EXAMPLE 5.) Scan a piece of Poetry with due regard to its poetic form; transpose it completely into Prose, carrying the thought without the form, and note the maimed effect. Get a picture of Rheims cathedral before the bombardment and compare it with a photograph of the same after the desecration; the structure may still be usable, but in its form having been impaired, its symmetry and recurrence of pinnacle and spire and arches (which correspond to comma, period, and paragraph) hav-*



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*ing been destroyed, its beauty becomes one of memory rather than of fact. Let an indifferent narrator retail a stage play he has witnessed and note the flatness of the story because of the omission of the periodic crises which have so deftly re-occurred while they sustained the rational balance of the piece.*

We come to the second test—that of Power and appeal. Herein our devices become more subtle, taking on an *internal* character that is *felt* rather than seen. We seek to reveal the soul of the composition rather than the body. We appeal to the *emotions*, rather than to the senses.

(EXAMPLE 6.) *We encounter the same differences as we discern in the rhyme which may be seen and heard, and the rhythm which must be felt. In Drama the nice interweaving of lines delights the senses, but it is the subtle interaction of crises that moves the soul, which is the greater of the two.*

Matter or material up until the time it has received the last moulding touch of the artist remains in some degree an ineloquent mass or body. Give it that necessary artistic finish and the body becomes organic, the mass eloquent. This final quality we shall call *Rhythm*.

Rhythm is that resonant quality in a work of Art that begins with a still small voice in

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the soul of the participator and grows and grows—in *waves* of melody—until at the end its volume becomes so great that our soul resounds with the climacteric crash of symphonic thunder. Or so it should be, in the case of Fiction, Drama, and Photodrama, with ever-recurring crises, periodic climacteric “curtains,” all tending toward a mighty climax!

*(EXAMPLE 7.) Listen to the Orator in his fine periods ever waxing more eloquent. Read the Novel and feel the anxious pleasure of each reverberating chapter-end. Witness the Stage Drama and rejoice in the agony of suspense that follows each curtain, except the last. What would the Oration, the Novel or the Drama be without them?*

In how far the Chapter division in the case of the Novel, and the Act division in that of Stage Play, are essential, we are fully capable of judging in terms of *effect*. Take away the Act division and we may as well rob the arch of its keystone.

Let us consider the Photodrama. Short Photoplays, like short stories or other short pieces of Art conception, were capable of being perfectly expressed by the mere subdivision into incidents, crises, and scenes, because the piece was completed before the average mind would lose its focus through

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the collapse of its powers of concentrated attentiveness.

But the Feature Photoplay is another story. It is, or should be, quite the equal in depth, weight, substance, breadth, and length of the average Novel or Stage Play. In point of actual duration of its expression, it takes from one to two hours of intense, rapid unfolding. Any technical expedient that has been employed effectively in one of the sister Arts that are so closely allied to it in many particulars, should receive serious consideration.

It is true that the one-mile—or more—mass of film is divided into multitudinous Scenes. These paragraphs are punctuated by many Situations and Crises. They are garnished frequently with many photographic scenes of great beauty. They are further sub-divided and spiced by numerous Captions.

The moving picture—which is many eons removed from Photodrama—had its inception in the invention of a mechanical device that reproduced photographs progressively in imitation of motion. At an early stage the negative film of these progressive photographs was wound on spools, or *reels*, containing one thousand feet of film. The reel became the natural *unit* of quantity and measure of mo-

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tion picture film. But the reel became more than the mere physical and commercial unit. In the early days it developed a certain Dramatic value. This came about because of the necessity to stop the exhibition abruptly at the end of each reel when it had run out. Several minutes intervened while an additional reel was being substituted. In a crude way stories came to be built by reels to avoid destruction of Story and Suspense Values through having the projection broken before a Situation had been sufficiently developed.

Thus a Technical division of rare Dramatic value was early, and literally, stumbled upon. But as the mechanical improvements progressed and it became possible to project multiple reel subjects without pausing to change the reels, the construction by reels or any other unit larger than the scene, or the scene-group, was no longer deemed necessary.

Why not continue the construction of Photoplays by reels? Not that we are seeking to facilitate the mechanics of projection, but that we mean to enhance the Mechanics of Drama. Nor do we mean that each of these units, come what may, shall be stretched or dwarfed to precisely one thousand feet. All we are seeking is a unit equivalent to the Act in the Stage Drama; and if such a unit

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or Act could approximate in duration the length of a piece of film contained on a reel, all the better. If occasionally our unit reached its curtain in as little as seven hundred feet, or as much as twelve hundred feet, still well and good, for a reel will hold either length. And if, rarely, cases rise wherein the physical reel would have to be discarded in attempting to take care of our unit or Act, then better still, for what we are trying to formulate is not a law of Procrustes, but an essential principle of Photodrama. And when mere mechanics or minor commercial considerations begin to hamper the healthy operation of a man's, or Art's, principles they are bound to invite a flaw into his or its character.

While Photodrama is decidedly *not* Stage Drama, yet it is more closely allied to it than it is to Fiction. The *presentation* of a Photoplay, through the medium of actors, on a screen-stage, before an audience, and in a theater, is almost identical with that of a Stage Play. Both are Drama, hence both are dependent on the same larger laws for their larger effects.

*(EXAMPLE 8.) At one time or another we have seen the Photodrama borrowing all the tricks of stagecraft. On the other hand, we have seen the*

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*stage appropriating many clever devices which had their origin on the screen. Take, for example, the Photoplay device of "visioning" scenes one of the characters is telling about, in "On Trial." Or the same thing in "Forever After," wherein the delirious soldier revisions his dramatic youth.*

The *tour de force* of both Stage Drama construction and expression is the Act. Hence the Act is not merely a convention to enable the audience to get its breath, or to regain its power of attentiveness, or a period for the change of scenery. Frequently no change in scenery is necessary. The Act is the device that does the Dramatic trick.

If the Act is the Technical strategy that so largely enhances the effect of the Stage Play, and the Photoplay is subject to the same law of effect, then why should we not by all means employ the same device? The Act unit should lose none of its potentiality in the Photoplay. Because of its multiplicity and fragmentation, the Photoplay would be benefited by more frequent Acts. But the Act principle will always be the same. There must be the Beginning, the Middle, and the End; the Introduction, the Crisis, and the Dénouement. These three requisites are met in the three Acts of the Stage Play. In the cases of the four-act or five-act plays, the

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Crisis is re-duplicated at the end of Acts II and III. In the case of the Photoplay, our first reel, or Part, or Act, concerns itself with Introduction, the last Part concerns itself with Dénouement, the Part before the last ends with the Grand Crisis, and the intermediate Parts—though they be six in number—concern themselves with essential phases in the development of the play, each ending with a cumulative Crisis.

It is more correct to say that the Act unites, rather than divides. It unites the Crises of the play with the bonds of Suspense, which are tighter and stronger than all other devices combined. The Act is that subtle Rhythm that winds and winds the Suspense while holding the attention, in great sweeping cycles, until the catastrophe thunders into our presence and the mighty hour of our play has come and gone.

*(EXAMPLE 9.) An analogy to the cumulative power of Rhythm might be cited from the physical realm in the case of any large body of soldiers crossing a bridge. They are called upon to break step. If they remained in step, any but the strongest structure would succumb to the cumulative volume of the Rhythm that would shake its foundations.*

The Act then—or Part, as we shall term it in relation to the Photodrama—is a Law of

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effective Dramatic Construction, not a rule. We may set up a rule advising what length a Part in Photodrama might be, but there are worthy exceptions to all rules. But the Law cannot be evaded or violated without the suffering of the person or the property whom it governs.

In another chapter we shall demonstrate with what added facility the Author may construct the Feature Photoplay when one builds in Parts. It will be shown how the Photoplay is relieved of possible tedium and multiplied in Power. It will be illustrated how the Appeal to the audience will be strengthened and the Dramatic effect heightened.

We should now be prepared to meet a serious obstacle in our progress. That is the commercial and mechanical powers-that-be who seem actually eager to waste a thousand dollars a day in experimenting on *tawdry effects*, but who will hesitate a year before they will invest a cent in a single logical *cause*. Millions for *de luxe* trappings, but not one cent for elucidating inquiry!



*If the Motion Picture Industry has prospered so largely by a scientific study of Distribution and a Businesslike Organization of the Trade, in a like manner it would seem that the Art of the Photodrama might be benefited if those who exploit it would honestly seek to learn its true Nature and unite in a Universal Studio Interpretation and a Standard Form of Preparing Plays.*

### CHAPTER III

#### THE UTILITY OF A STANDARD FORM

GETTING TOGETHER; CO-ORDINATION; WASTED TIME; CHAOS; DEMAND FOR INTELLIGENCE AS WELL AS MECHANICS; INTERPRETERS ALL; ORIGINAL STORIES THE DEMAND; THE ESSENTIAL TO PROGRESS.

**I**F Tom, Dick and Harry, and a countless multitude of relative writers, each writes a play in his own language, to suit himself, and which he himself alone can interpret, it is evident that these plays will not be comprehended by others. If each studio has its own

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jargon that has come up from the soil of mechanics and if scores of those who read and handle the scripts are mechanics themselves, it is possible that some of them may not comprehend the flights of artistic souls whose language of the Play they do not speak. If the scripts pass on for interpretation and approval from reader to editor, from editor to director—sometimes to a half dozen others, including the star—is it any wonder that occasional misapprehensions should creep in? And when the script is bought, and the author is quite forgotten, and the golden vision of his soul is edited by the editor, given a new meaning by the continuity writer and then puzzled over by the director—who finally ignores all revisions and goes ahead according to his lights, driving his agile cast blindly through the fragments, aiming at, and maybe achieving some lurid effects—is it at all extraordinary that the author of the idea should witness the result on the screen and curse the Photodrama?

*(EXAMPLE 10.) We wonder if Charles Hanson Towne was one of these disgruntled authors when he was inspired to write a poem in which he called the motion picture theater a "dim cavern," where "sailors would hug their girls." Surely poets should be inspired to say greater things of it than that!*

## UTILITY OF STANDARD FORM

What are the reasons for such a series of "misunderstandings"? They are seldom deliberate; ignorance never is that, it is more often a case of negligence. Ignorance usually follows in the wake of too much prosperity, or too little. When some people get too much money they get the idea also that money can take the place of brains and they scoff at education. On the other hand, when some people have too little money they cannot afford education. Both of these groups are lacking in common sense. Education need cost but little, and we must have it if we want either to make money or to keep it!

The motion picture industry is fabulously wealthy. Its investment annually in studios, stars and stories exceeds the wealth of the Indies. And yet it worries itself sick! About what, do you think? Studios and stars? Slightly, yes—but money can buy *them*. Its real nightmare is *stories*. But money can buy them? Yes, and no. It can buy books and plays which are scrapped for their stories, like best-selling ships of their day are scrapped for the precious iron and steel they contain. Only the motion picture magnate pays ten times the original price of the piece, instead of ten times less.

Then the supply may run out! So few

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books and plays are suited to motion picture production—or re-production. They seldom are recognizable when they appear on the screen. The craze is for this stuff, but what the business really wants is *original stories!*

They say this half-heartedly and they mean it half-heartedly. They are afraid—and they have just reason, because of bitter experience—of original stories, and their original writers. So they fairly flew into the arms of experienced writers of more or less seasoned published stories and produced plays.

But what has happened to the native Photodrama? What will happen to the struggling, rising school of young Photoplaywrights who were feeling their way in this new field over which hung such a brilliant rainbow of deceptive promise?

They found a pot of gold—but not at the foot of their own rainbow. For the original writers have melted away into that new school—that of continuity writers, adapters, copyists, though seldom interpreters—of the published and produced works of writers in *another field* to whom they must now play second and third fiddle. Meanwhile those other fields are being degenerated and prostituted largely by avaricious writers seeking to make their work so like the “movies” that

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they will command big prices on the screen before they are dry on the press.

*(EXAMPLE 11.) It is not to be construed, as we shall show conclusively later, that we do not believe that the Message and Vision contained in a Book or Stage Play cannot be faithfully translated into a Photoplay. We believe it emphatically. Furthermore, we believe it can be interpreted in Music, Painting, and the other great Arts. But now we speak of Art and Artists!*

Excepting in rare cases, fear seems to have dominated the course and progress of original Photodrama. There has been a fear of originality, a fear of enlightenment, a fear of Technique, a fear of Form. Well or ill founded, the result in the progress of the Art has been stultifying, although the growth of the industry has been "beyond the dreams of avarice." The promoters and exploiters of the motion picture will wave to the millions who throng their theaters and tell you that no greater tribute to their work is necessary, that the public is satisfied! Is the public satisfied with motion pictures? Not one devotee in fifty is. Occasionally, they will tell you, they see something wonderful!

*(EXAMPLE 12.) We motion picture people and our work have become a serious matter so occasion-*

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ally that we are dubbed "The Movies," to discriminate us from the fine art of Stage Drama, just as we differentiate between the Italian and "The Wop." If this seems unmerited for a moment, we have but to examine the trade journals and study the childish advertisements, so exaggerated that they appeal amusedly to the circus instinct only; read the Movie Magazines, so largely cluttered with the veriest puerile nonsense about "picture people"; look at the posters outside most theaters naively seeking intelligent audiences by means of lurid prints that put "The Penny Dreadful" in the shade; scan the criticism and comment in general of photoplays and photoplayers, and you will find yourself wading in slush and pulchritude. If these are largely our own reflections of ourselves, we must expect the smirk of opinion. Have we no dignity? Yes, occasionally, just as we have among us some great geniuses and reflect our future grandeur in great Photoplays—occasionally!

Is it not about time that motion picture people and photodramatists "got together"? There are certain qualities in pictures that make good money, just as there must be certain qualities in plays that make good plays. And it is most certain that these two qualities may be employed in the same product at the same time. Thus the best plays may be conceived and built to bring the best returns.

(EXAMPLE 13.) *We have but to turn to several which, if they were not perfect, were fine and contained elements of genius. They succeeded finan-*

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cially beyond their punier fellows! "*Broken Blossoms*," "*The Gay Old Dog*," "*Blind Husbands*," "*The Miracle Man*."

Writers as a class have been ignored, except for what they could or could not do. And writers as a class have condemned producers for a lack of consideration, sympathy, and co-operation. The question is in many ways not unlike that of capital and labor. The writer is in a very real sense the laborer. The industry and the public must suffer until they both get together on a common plane of understanding! There is need for far more cooperation.

It is but fair at this point to state emphatically, that writers have been anything but sincere and far-seeking as a class to probe the depths of photodrama and to study the exigencies of the motion picture. The well-meaning triflers with photoplay material within the studios came much nearer to solving the immediate problem, at least, though they were seldom story tellers, than did the arrogant writers of fiction and drama who haughtily invaded the new field without ever seeking out the true nature of its needs. They and the horde of outside contributors, all seeking some of the notorious wealth it was said to be carelessly spilling about, in

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their ignorance did little to raise the Photodrama.

Coordination, then, is the great need of the Photodrama today.

Coordination means simply that the head shall order what the hand shall do. If the hand does not do what the head orders, we speak of that organization or organism as being deranged. Its administration becomes inane, its action chaos.

Effectual coordination implies that the mind understands perfectly what it essays; and the worker must be in sympathy with the project in every way in order to give it perfect expression.

In essaying the creation and production of Photodrama, the first question that rises is, Do we know what Photodrama is? Again, Do we know how to give it perfect expression? Are we acquainted with its needs—artistic, productive, and exhibitivè? Does the producer know the creator of the story, and his potentialities? Does the author know the producer and his problems? Do they understand and *sympathize* with each other? If these conditions are not met fairly, then there is not perfect coordination and there cannot be perfect Photodrama without perfect coordination.



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The operation of the mind does not cease for a second until the hand has traced the story on the screen and it is reflected in the heart of the audience!

(EXAMPLE 14.) *We offer the suggestion that a School of Photoplay Writing be founded. Not an ephemeral, crude, rough and ready "practical" affair. Nor an academic hall presided over by learned professors exuding embalmed theory and leading young highbrows astray. Nor yet an institution founded on private capital, baiting the public with promises of fame and fortune. No, there are other ways that alone mean progress in every phase of motion pictures and Photodrama. They have but to follow out the best traditions in implanting the rudiments, theory, technique, and practice of other dignified professions and vocations from Theology to Architecture. They have no more and no less theory, they are equally utilitarian. None can boast of a higher service to mankind! A central School might be established near Los Angeles or New York where students could work in practical conjunction with the studios. Teachers would be chosen both for their pedagogical power of imparting to others and their practical knowledge in pointing their ideas. Men with ideas in every phase of the huge work would deliver lectures made practical by illustrative motion pictures. Maybe the work might be broadened in a Motion Picture College, where all branches would be taken up and merged co-operatively—Photoplay Writing, Photography, Directing, Acting, Stage Setting, Projecting.*

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Once there is perfect coordination in the conception, production and exhibition of motion picture Drama, once we all find out what it is about, and all find that it is about the same thing and learn to speak the same studio language in the same technical form of ideas—which does not mean that we shall ever express ourselves in the same individual Photodramas, for, thank God, that is where genius will ever outmeasure mediocrity!—then watch this new wonder, the Photodrama, grow!

*This building a Play around our Heroine's curls is like building an insane asylum around a child's tantrums. In both cases the enfant terrible should get what she deserves and we should have better sense.*

## CHAPTER IV

### PHOTODRAMA VERSUS PICTURES

"PICTURES" NOT A SYNONYM; ONLY A BACKGROUND; SIGNIFICANCE OF "SCENE"; THE "PRETTY PLAY"; THE STAR SYSTEM.

WITHOUT doubt the term "picture" always will have some synonymic association with the Photodrama. What could be more natural, when the original, and possibly enduring, generic name for the industry, process, and production as a whole is "motion pictures"?

There are many internal contributory causes that have led to an over-emphasis on the picture side of the Photoplay.

(EXAMPLE 15.) *The assistant-director, or location-man, will pick out "locations" for outdoor scenes for their pictorial effectiveness. This is altogether commendable if the scenes thus chosen are in harmony with the dramatic scene. But there are directors who will work a scene of great natural beauty "to death," for its pictorial values alone.*

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All said and done, pictures as pictures have nothing to do with plays as plays unless they are a spiritual background for given plays.

(EXAMPLE 16.) *One well-known production company for many years noted for its exceptionally backward and bad photoplays, retained the services of an artist of the first rank to set his seal on the settings. The pictures were good, but the plays were atrocious. These producers were willing to spend thousands of dollars to have the draperies and flowerpots just right, but it is not known that they ever invested a cent to learn why their Drama was botched. It is doubtful if they ever knew. The public did, however. But it considered itself damned as usual and only sighed.*

It is the function of the Painter of Pictures to express his Art in the picture alone. It is not the function of the creators of Drama to present physical pictures merely. What the spectator of Drama sees with the eye is merely incidental. So-called dramatic pictorial pageantry is, or should be known, as Spectacle. An excellent word to describe the incidental picture or background, is that used in stage drama—Setting. The pictured background—whether indoors or out—tells us merely *where* the action is going on. And it should tell us that fact emphatically, without our having to ask any questions. The important questions remain—*Why* it is going

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on, and *How* it is going to end? Not pictures, but the Play's the thing. Pictures are a conventional necessity, just like other props. But they should never be employed for pictorial effects alone, and they should always be consistent in spirit with the theme.

*(EXAMPLE 17.) One early theorist who essayed teaching photoplay technique fostered the "picture" tendencies by insisting that all backgrounds should be beautiful! Imagine the spiritual dissonance of having crime, poverty, pestilence, suffering and all the other motors of pathos, pity and disgust, set in a bed of roses! Without contrast, the essence of Drama—which is the essence of Life—becomes tasteless.*

Again, the word "scene" has been responsible, in a measure, for the pictorial myth. Ordinarily, a scene is something that may be looked at, appreciated, and enjoyed. "Scene" frequently indicates a sight that is either beautiful or exciting. In Drama, however, a scene is a makeshift made necessary because we could not possibly have had the action take place in the same location as the one preceding it. The continuity of the Photodrama demands a constant shift of scene in order to progress. In neither case is the scene essential because of the pictured background, but because it is a technical device to advance the movement of the drama.

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(EXAMPLE 18.) *Granted, that a photoplay had simple plot and powerful enough premise, if the drama were there and we knew Why it was, the scenes could be shown against a black drop with full effectiveness. Who cares Where a thing is going on, if it IS going on? If it is conflict, it is bound to be interesting. All of which is no argument to eliminate pictures, but to subordinate them.*

We do not present pictures for pictures' sake in Drama, then, but we present Drama for the sake of an audience *visioning* even greater pictures that their imagination or pictorial sense is capable of stirring in their souls because of our dramatic *symbols*. Pictures enhance our symbols, but our story is not created because of the setting.

(EXAMPLE 19.) *Take the stage play, "The Yellow Jacket." There were three acts, but with no change of scene; as a matter of fact there were no scenes at all. The many locations were effected through the cleverness of the lines, supplemented by that of the actors, who pretended all manner of adventures in all manner of places and shifted a few properties before the eyes of the audience—who visioned a thousand-and-one scenes.*

In the very early days, in the case of one conspicuous company, motion picture "plays" were written around a menagerie retained by the company at great expense. If it was not constantly employed, it was in imminent dan-

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ger of "eating its head off." A Macedonian cry went forth to the writers of that day for "animal stories." The screened result bore excellent comparison with the illustrated animal stories in the gaudy Christmas juvenile books. Grown-up children were both thrilled and amused delectably. Very playful "plays," without a doubt; but they were not Drama. Because the producers of that generation half believed they were Drama, they and their fortunes have melted away.

*(EXAMPLE 20.) We recall one entitled, we think, "When the Circus Broke Loose," wherein all the wild animals in a circus, because of a wreck or storm, prowled or rushed into the homes and the lives of a quiet village with tragical and farcical results. The child in us fairly howled with delight.*

The perhaps hardier and possibly more skeptical race of producers that displaced the menagerie managers brought with them their own household gods, or goddesses, which immediately they proceeded to set up. Instead of wild animals, the screen was plastered with very tame ingénues.

*(EXAMPLE 21.) The vogue of Mary Pickford and her myriad imitators will be recalled. Mary Pickford is delightful in everything she does on the screen. She is an artiste. As an ingénue or juvenile she will remain paramount simply because she is*

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*inimitable. Mary was successfully imitated only in the matter of her flaxen curls; in all other particulars the others were as candles before the sun! But that does not excuse Mary Pickford, with her rare gift of dramatic power, for her prolonged career amidst the vapid antics, the sticky saccharinity, the curls and the tantrums. Thus Mary made of herself more of a "spoiled child of the movies" than her imitators, because at their worst they were at least doing their best*

We have tried to show that the "pretty play" is seldom more or less than pictures. We do not deny that pictures as such have their place and are fulfilling a demand, possibly a need. With no brains in the audience, Drama is superfluous. We shall always have with us the "tired business man," the giggling girl, bewhiskered children and sentimental babies, who for obvious reasons will never know the infinite delights afforded by Art. They will fume at a servant or sob over a Pomeranian, but they never allow themselves to become sympathetic and excited over a noble epic uplifting their lives from the stage or screen! Thus we may surmise that the sugar-coated-pill industry will never languish. And so-called plays will be interspersed with crying and laughing babies, trained monkeys, dogs and cats and other pretty trappings to elicit the proper flow of gush.



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(EXAMPLE 22.) *One producing company in particular made it one of its principles of production to introduce a baby or a pet animal in every picture, hanging on to its antics until its cuteness became a positive bore. And, to quote a current paragraph mentioning a current play, "Another feature of this week's entertainment is 'Four Times Foiled,' in which a baby, a trained monkey, a horse, a dog and a pig play prominent parts." We recall our own play, "A Dream or Two Ago," from which the effective climax of one Part was omitted to give way to several hundred feet of organ grinder and his monkey—he was such a cute monkey!—which the director found irresistible.*

Thus stories have been written and produced all around the mulberry bush, as it were. We refer to nothing less than by far the larger part of the so-called "best" production of the day, too. Seldom did a virile dramatic idea present itself, and rarely did it find expression in a forceful drama. No one can honestly brand motion picture producers, in every phase of the work, with indolence—their industry is a miracle of what unflagging brawn and ingenuity can accomplish. In the matters of economics, logical thought and artistic inquiry they have been sadly lacking. They have been largely financial opportunists, rather than reasoning builders. They have

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seemed to give credit to Today only and to have reserved little trust for Tomorrow.

We now arrive at the final picture-versus-drama menace of Today, which seems likely to endure until Tomorrow and forever after. We refer to the Star System.

The star system has its merits in ratio to the merits of the star it endeavors to exploit.

*(EXAMPLE 23.) An Edwin Booth of the photodrama may rightly command the best talents of the best dramatists in order that we may tempt forth every nuance of the supreme dramatic potentiality of a great Artist. Even lesser artists whose genius can be reflected and expressed roundly and effulgently, after the manner of the stars, should command our serious consideration and custom-made product, if we are convinced that it be art for art's sake.*

Again our shaft is aimed at the mere picture, rather than at that phase of legitimate Photodrama or Drama, that endeavors to delineate a single extraordinary character that stands apart—benign or diabolical—whose example is to be imitated or eschewed and whose screen or stage revelation adds an important volume to the archives of human Life.

In another chapter, and practically rather than theoretically, we shall discuss the star in

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relation to construction and motivation of the Photoplay. These chapters on Theory are pointed with Criticism in the hope of eliminating untoward developments from further consideration by the time we are prepared to undertake technical progression.

We return to a former premise, by emphasizing that a picture "setting," hashed or rehashed to meet the specifications of mere beauty per se, shallowness, curls, and inability of an idle high-salaried star, seldom results in a Photoplay. Drama has nothing to do with mere personal appearance. Physical movements, whether agile or eccentric, are of mediocre value; all the advertisement of a star in the world can no more than stir superficial curiosity. Drama is a very *personal conflict* in the process of evolution, culmination and consummation. Drama, and Photodrama in particular, needs artists of a high order to reveal the fine depths of a human soul working out its destiny in the thousand-and-one well-modulated expressions of manner, gesture, poise, repression, emotion, and magnetism.

*(EXAMPLE 24.) Again and again, we hear the echo of audiences asking, "Oh, where do they get some of these people we pay to see and suffer for,*

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*and, again, where do they get their names?" We have seen a director struggling a whole day with a pitifully incompetent little girl, picked up heaven knows where for her "picture" possibilities, trying to inculcate a simple Dramatic application into her poor tired brain. He finally got emotional response by swearing at her and making her cry in self pity. The result was called a "superb photoplay"! The bewildered little "star" was dizzy because of the great heights she was soaring above her former humble condition. Too, she was receiving exactly the salary of the President of the United States! We are not blaming these tinsel stars, but we hope the law of the Arts will some day fittingly punish those responsible for the sacrilege!*

In conclusion, let us reiterate that a "picture" is one thing, and the Photodrama is quite another. We do not gainsay that the "picture" has a distinct value or, possibly, an art all of its own, just as the Vaudeville has, though it is in its turn but a distant cousin to the Drama. But the limitations of the "picture" must not be confused with the infinitude of the Drama or Photodrama.

"Pictures" may be pleasing, gratifying a passing whim. The Photodrama must be influencing, satisfying an enduring desire.

The Photodrama is a Fine Art. It does—and forever will—require in its progressive steps, the best efforts of the best students and the finest talents of the finest artists.

*Photodrama offers as wide a scope and as luxuriant variety in its expression as is to be found in any other Fine Art.*

## CHAPTER V

### TYPES OF PHOTOPLAYS

AMONG THOSE PRESENT; THE PAGEANT AND SPECTACLE; THE FATE OF THE SHORT PLAY; SERIES AND SERIALS AND LITERARY COMPARISONS; WHICH ARE PHOTODRAMA OR FEATURE PHOTOPLAY?

**WHAT** is, and what is not a Photoplay? That is still the question! Thousands of people ask themselves that question daily and nightly, as they sit patiently and witness several miles of mimic medley unreeled before their eyes upon the screen.

The world and his wife and some of their children are attending a motion picture show somewhere every hour of the day and night. Take tonight in Our Town. Several twitching and yet bewitching, electrically-lighted signs on Main Street lure us to the "Movies." There is something childishly and luridly atmospheric in those garish lights and gaudy

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posters that cause our High Brows to lower and join forces with the Low Brows, slightly elevated for the occasion.

Let us check our Gray Matter in the cloak room and thus disarmed enter the enchanted realm of the "Movies." We grope to our seats and sit down about midway in the second convulsion of a custard-pie Comedy. The gallery gives a hoot in which our younger children join. Some very vulgar situations arise which are executed with lingering gusto and bad taste by what would be considered in real life as possibly ludicrous but nevertheless disgusting people. There is much promiscuous and playful kissing of unmated husbands and wives, and at length the chief disturber is thrown overboard and disappears, apparently drowned, amidst the uncontrolled glee of the gallery and an accelerated burst of jazz from the orchestra.

If all these slapstick farces are not so vulgar as the one alluded to, they are equally idiotic. Our protest might die on our lips if, when the exquisite lighting effects began to reveal our surroundings, we found ourselves in a squalid hall filled with ignorant and vulgar people. Instead, we find ourselves in a palatial playhouse filled in the main with prosperous and intelligent people. So they

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too have been treated to this unsavory pap! Evidently they have grown used to it, like other things in life that become common, for there is not a single frown of protest in sight.

It is worse than that. It indicates their opinion of the "Movies." It means that the larger part of the public looks tolerantly upon the "Movies" as a hybrid that may be vulgar, commit crimes, become asinine, and occasionally be normal. "Why worry about the 'Movies'?" We have heard the sentiment more than once; "they are not human, you know." So they indulge every whim of the "Movies" just as they do all other irresponsible, sub-human beings.

If audiences can be said to reason at all, they reason from the general to the particular. They bulk their whole "Movie" experience and say, "Well, the general run of them is pretty poor, so about every one you go to see is bound to be pretty poor." They lump the whole of screen production and dub it "Movies."

Is the producer of fustian films and frowsy farce altogether to blame for bringing disrepute on the whole of motion picture expression? Not altogether, if he has a ready market for it all. Or is the distributor at fault, for ladling out such stuff? The distributor

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will tell you that all he knows is, that the exhibitor sees or may see the "pictures" before he rents them for his theater. The exhibitor will tell you that he is giving the public what it wants!

*(EXAMPLE 25.) For instance, let us quote the contents of a current program of one of the finest photoplay houses in the world, catering to audiences whose taste and intelligence have every reason to be above question: "Selections from 'The Prince of Pilsen,' Screen Magazine, Solo from Liszt, Colored Pictures, Soprano Solo: 'Absinthe Frappe,' Feature Photoplay: 'The Six Best Cellars,' Orchestra: 'Alcoholic Blues,' Comedy: 'Her Bridal Nightmare,' Organ Solo: Concert Overture in C Minor." A comparison in reading matter would be something like this: A dip into "Graustark," a skip through the Sunday Supplement, a few pages of "The Tales of Hoffmann," a glance through "The Geographic Magazine," a peep into "Le Rire," an hour of "The Saturday Evening Post," a few moments' reflection of a discordant jazzed cabaret, a besmirching by "The Police Gazette," and finally a few stanzas from "Paradise Lost." Sausage and tripe and caviar and pickles and squab all in together!*

So we all pass the buck to the public that pays the bill. The psychology of the public is the psychology of the sheep. The public never thinks for itself constructively. There must be always a prophet or a demagog to



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segregate and organize its opinions and its prejudices. The public is successfully appealed to from above or from below it; it must be educated or passionized; it may be refined or debased in large masses by merely focussing on its self-respect or its self-esteem. So, in the name of all reason, do not let us wait to be guided by any concrete and constructive advice from the iconoclastic public.

The stupid public has a glimmer of the chief fact that we people of the Motion Picture and Photodrama have made it possible for them to glean; namely, that all this hodgepodge they go to see and hear at the best and worst houses is "*the Movies*"! The Screen Magazine, the ulcerated Comedy, the punctuated Pictographs, the cunning Cartoons, the Trave laughs, the gorgeous Spectacle, the pokey Pageant, the Series and the Serials, the good Comedy and the bad Melodrama and the perfect Feature Photoplay—they are all the Movies, individually and collectively, and vice versa, the Movies are nothing more nor less. Even the rejuvenated pipe organ and the resplendent orchestra are thought by a large portion of the public to be integral with the Movies, if not the best part of them.

In other words, in the confusion of the Movies, the Photodrama has been lost sight

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of. We are not speaking of the public now, we are not condemning the polyglot entertainment that serves to entertain millions; but we do deplore the losing of the diamond in the dust heap. The Photodrama, as reflected and expressed in the perfect Feature Photoplay, is the greatest concrete conception that Art has known for many centuries!

That the Photodrama should be billeted with a lot of twaddle in an evening's entertainment, is no less odd than that a sublime piece of Literature should be tucked away in a bookcase otherwise filled with trashy love stories. The people who own the theaters and the people who own the bookcases stand convicted of either ignorance or negligence. The childish public will come along and devour the contents of both and think because they are so well-housed they bear the stamp of high authority.

Are we motion picture people ignorant of what the Photodrama is or what it may become? Then we should educate ourselves and foster every attempt to make of Photodrama a fine Art. Are we penurious with what we have earned and avaricious of what the public still has? Just so long then shall we see the Photodrama famished and its future poverty-stricken.

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We return to our original proposition of what is and what is not Photodrama. We respect many of the forms of screen expression and we frown upon many others. If the variety fills a need, or serves a purpose, or illustrates the world and its events, or teaches us to see and think better, or amuses us cleanly, or reveals wonderful phenomena, all well and good. May they multiply and never end! But they are *not* Photodrama. They are one of the mere circumstances of living, while Photodrama is Life.

Let us eliminate a few of the so-called types that make up that vast clutter known as the "movies"; after which, with decks cleared, we may proceed with the Photodrama, unhampered and with mutual understanding.

In the early days the Pageant played a larger part in motion pictures than it does today. The purpose of the Pageant was to facsimile an important event in local or national history. In order to make it easy for the ignorant to swallow, it was frequently sugar-coated with more or less story flavor. Now and then dramatic moments were approximated.

The dramatic value of the Pageant was notably advanced when it merged into the

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motion picture Spectacle, wherein greater stress was laid upon the story than upon the historical facts it attempted to portray. The chief characters were created by the author, and the story hinged upon their struggles rather than upon the movements of well-known figures of history.

*(EXAMPLE 26.) The above was true of the prototype of all American spectacles, "The Birth of a Nation." It became true also, at a later date, of "Hearts of the World," "Civilization," and others. History served as a background for the fictitious characters whose lives were dramatic symbols of the great events thus illustrated.*

For a time we were promised an epoch of epic drama. The chosen subjects themselves were fraught with all the makings of splendid art, but the producers and the directors were of the motion-picture movie, and so they came to adopt the tactics that emphasized the spectacular and neglected the truly dramatic.

*(EXAMPLE 27.) We all remember the over-emphasis laid on the thunderous appearances of the "three thousand horsemen of the Ku-Klux Klan" thrilling blatantly, with the collusion of the orchestra, out of the startled audience all of the fine tender sentiments that were being marshalled for an effective climax. Good drama is spoiled by a startling exploitation of the sensations; it is enhanced by the*

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gentlest appeal to the emotions. Even in that beautiful and unsurpassed dramatic spectacle, "Quo Vadis," fatal emphasis was laid on the destruction of Rome. In "Joan the Woman" the battle scenes and other externals calculated to take away our breath and impress us with "no expense has been spared," were given space until in the excitement we forgot all else. In Drama we should never be permitted for an instant to forget the *raison d'être*. In "Cabiria" there was a difference, for we had a Spectacle pure and simple—and ever delightful. In "Judith of Bethulia" wondrous scenes and startling action were produced independent of the emotion and internal conflict that was the basis of it all.

Thus, in our analysis of what has proved to be Photodrama—or more particularly the Feature Photoplay—and what has failed to do so, we are led to conclude that the ambitious historical Photoplay so far essayed has been at best but dramatic Spectacle. To accommodate the excess baggage of gorgeous and dynamic Spectacle several reels have generally been added, bringing into being a new classification which we might term the Super-Feature.

(EXAMPLE 28.) *Not that historical plays are to be eschewed. The fame of Shakespeare is built largely upon his dramatic use of historical figures and crises. But a study of the Bard will reveal that his thematic characters dominated or motivated*

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*dynamic and atmospheric scenes in such a way that they always stood head and shoulders above them and could never be forgotten in the turmoil for an instant.*

And so on, through the long list of entertaining features to which the Screen has given birth. And there are myriad varieties yet to come! The Cartoon, the Pictograph, the Screen Magazine, the Travelogue, the Travelaugh, the imbecile Farce, Phenomena of Photography, and possibly the other fifty-seven varieties, like the original "57 Varieties," are all excellent pickles and mince-meat, no doubt; but they only garnish the roast beef, which is the big thing after all. The Photodrama as it may be expressed in the Feature Photoplay, is the roast beef.

Having disposed of the non-dramatic forms, let us briefly discuss several of the kinds of screen production which are capable of attaining Photodrama.\* It is our purpose here only to point out how they differ from the Feature Photoplay, as future chapters will undertake to show how all Photodrama may have its inception and development.

One of the most fertile fields in Photo-

\* If the reader or student is interested further, it is suggested that he read and study "The Photodrama," by the present author.

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drama has been long neglected in ignoring the splendid values of the Short Photoplay. By the Short Photoplay we mean one capable of being expressed in one, two or even three reels of film, though three reels is in danger of becoming a mongrel. The Short Photoplay bears the precise comparison to the Feature Photoplay that the One-Act Play bears to the Full-Length Stage Drama. Offering the Novel as the analogy of the Feature Photoplay, we may fittingly compare the Short Story with the Short Play.

Constructing the Short Photoplay, then, as we construct the One-Act Play, with one great character, one great motive, one great climax or punch; and at once we have an expression of Photodrama that can hold its own, just as the One-Act Play and the Short Story hold theirs.

Series and Serials deserve to be popular in Photodrama just as much as they do in print. It is largely a question of quality in both. We employ the term Photodrama analogously with Literature. They are both the high Art of the species. Series and Serials were without a notable exception, stark Melodrama until 1920. As Melodrama is at best Art over-exaggerated, we can admit it only as far as the threshold of good Photodrama. Serials

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seem to depend for their lurid effects upon Melodrama, but there is no reason why Series may not share with the Short Species of Photoplay a highly artistic destiny.

In a very brief space we have tried to differentiate the Feature Photoplay from other forms that may be classed equally as Photodrama. But what we have been most anxious to do, is to separate it entirely from the mediocrity that shrouds it when it is generalized as "the Movies."

"The Movies," and each of their wholesome manifestations, if they accomplish the end of successfully entertaining the multitude, like the circus, vaudeville and Punch-and-Judy, have a good reason for being and doing. Greetings and long life to them!

Our single aim has been to show that "the Movies" can never be Photodrama!



*The Method employed in fashioning a worth-while Work can be no more haphazard than the Manner of a man taking a serious step in Life—both are fraught with Experience and Training, Personality and Mood.*

## CHAPTER VI

### METHODS OF PRESENTATION

PRESENTATION AND EXPRESSION; THE ARTIST-AUTHOR; PHASES OF PRESENTATION; THE DESTINY OF A PHOTOPLAY.

**B**Y presentation we mean—almost, but not quite—expression. We alone can express our own thoughts and ideas. Others, however, may interpret our thoughts and ideas and present them before the world.

Before we can express ourselves adequately we must understand ourselves, and then learn the language of our particular region of Art. We call this language *Technique*. If our interpreter intends to present *our photodramatic ideas*, we must of course speak a common tongue, must make ourselves intelligible to him. He must understand us! It

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will take a sympathetic expert to translate correctly our ideas from our original tongue into a universal language.

The process of photodramatic presentation is all the foregoing. The conception of the idea is the author's. He weaves it into a plot composed of *words* and gives it over to the tender mercies of the multiple producers who must translate it into *action*. Surely a delicate process, fraught with temptation, peril and even disaster—to the original idea.

Plays, like people, are endowed with a personality at birth. With what personality a play is conceived, with that same personality it should live its life and fulfill its destiny. If a play-plan, or plot, is forced out of its natural orbit, it acts and lives and finally dies an unnatural death. It becomes a square peg in a round hole, a misfit, and, as in the case of so many mortals whose life and destiny are tampered with, its life is ruined.

With the long-existing lack of unity in purpose, technique, and final expression, between author, rewriter, and producer, it is not to be wondered at that photoplays have been garbled somewhere along the line between conception and production.

To say that an author merely conceives a plot, suggests an idea as it were to motion

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picture people for motion picture production, is to divide hopelessly the author and motion picture Art. And such indeed has been the common implication, from within the motion picture ranks at least. At this point we must qualify our term "author" unreservedly. The writer who merely submits a plot and leaves the photoplay to others, is but a plotter after all. Our photoplay author must conceive and express his plot with *a full knowledge and vision of the screened play.*

All said and done, the artist-author is the foundation of the Photodrama, and the Photodrama is the bulwark of the Feature Photoplay.

Phases of presentation should not be as much a matter of the genius of producers, as they ought to be a revelation of the texture and color of the author's mind and emotions during the labor of conception. Thus it happens that brain-children are born under specific dominating stars of destiny, some to live happily, others to struggle tragically; some to saunter amidst fantasy, others to laugh or to be laughed at. Thus, while we may say that comedy and tragedy are accidents of mind and mood and viewpoint of the author at the time of the play's conception, yet it is equally true that these qualities become the *ruling*

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events in the character and life and environment of the play henceforth to the end.

(EXAMPLE 29-30) *Two common conditions in the development of the photoplay have led to the utter destruction of more than one splendid basic dramatic idea or theme. One condition has been that lamentable want of mutual understanding between author and continuity writer, wherein the author, utterly lacking in technical knowledge, failed to express himself, and the rewriter in despair was compelled to make a "free translation" that twisted the original intent into a short-lived cripple. The other condition is that of the rewriter, director, or other producer with vaulting ambition egged on by a prolific triteness to improve upon the original story of the author. Custom has permitted him a free hand, and the author is scorned as the parent of the gnarled progeny that hobble across the screen. We have in mind an instance where a photoplay was built upon the benevolent activities of a charming old man known as "A Builder of Castles." The rewrite man saw an angle he liked better and on the screen the benevolent character was crowded quite into the shadow and the unsuspected villain with an original set of villainies took his place in the foreground. Yet strangely—to those who do not recognize the vengeance from tampering with destiny—the characters that had been created flesh and blood had shrivelled on the screen to animated puppets!*

Bear in mind that, in discussing the destiny of a play, we mean its lifelong spiritual endowments, not the mere physical accidents

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of environment and condition that happen to surround its beginning. A change from luxury to poverty, or vice versa, is a dramatic advantage. But a change from an inherently morose to an inherently happy mind, or from basic tragedy to basic comedy, or from prevailing evil to prevailing good, is inherently, basically and prevailingly *unnatural*.

Thus we may assume that the spirit of presentation must be identical with the spirit of conception. Plays are conceived, then, after a certain *genre*, and they preserve their species throughout their course by means of a consistent *treatment*.

*By Personalizing a Play, we mean the Preserving of its good Health, Safe-guarding its Principles, Keeping it true to Form, Enforcing Consistency from every fiber, until it becomes so Typically Perfect that it ceases to be objectively outside an audience, but rather subjectively a part of their own Experience.*

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PERSONALITY OF PLAYS

PLAY CHARACTER; FARCE; COMEDY; COMEDY-  
DRAMA; DRAMA; MELODRAMA; TRAGEDY.

UNRELIABLE, inconsistent, and disloyal people have few friends. A marked lack of sincerity in their make-up makes them untrustworthy. Such people lack poise and balance and scarcely command our serious attention. The basic trouble lies in the fact that they do not know what they are going to do themselves! In other words, they are moved by impulses, swayed by whims, and will wantonly face a cataclysm. Their life is not ordered by those great principles that inspire, restrain and guide human conduct in

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moments of indecision and crisis. We say of such people that they are wanting in character and have no commanding *personality*.

Photodrama is founded on character, and each photodrama in its ensemble has a character, or *personality*, all its own. We might call this latter endowment its spirit, which is ever atune to its emotional well-being. And as there is an ever-present reflection of spirit in the flesh and word and deed of the normal human being, so should there be a like consistency of form and action to the spirit in which the drama-being is conceived and has that being.

*(EXAMPLE 31.) The analogy is equally true of all works of art, as it is indeed one of the principles of Art itself. The rollicking spirit of a Jordaens canvas is skillfully reflected in its darkest corner, where we see the ripple of coarse laughter even in the over-turned tankard. A single Byzantine column amidst the Gothic glory of Amiens Cathedral would shock our soaring imagination into a state of impiety. A false note or a vagrant motif in one of Wagner's fine orchestrations would jangle and decharacterize the whole sublime creation.*

In life, among our friends, in the very midst of our families, we have our Farceurs who carry the comedy of Life a little too far; we have our Comedians who refuse to take

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Life seriously; we have our Comedy-Dramatists whom we find one day happy and the next day solemn; we have our Dramatists who battle Life seriously and who, we know, are going to win out in the end; we have our Melodramatists who are always over-acting Life and exaggerating its commonplaces; and we have our Tragedians, alas, of whom Life, with some untoward circumstances and environment, has broken the spirit, and who in the end must be crushed!

Yet in each case do we find our fellow man's destiny in a large measure prognosticated in the radiation of his personality, particularly when he has reached maturity. Reliable, rational men are consistent and *true to type*. Human nature cannot lie.

Thus in our *Farcical Play*, as in the antics of our circus clown, there is a *characteristic spirit* that must dominate and maintain throughout the farce, or the clown's "turn." Clownery becomes our *theme*, our point of view, our *raison d'être*. We employ the terminology, the atmosphere, and the antics of horseplay. For a brief period the audience is made to live the life of the buffoon.

(EXAMPLE 32.) *It is just as absurd for a clown to come "out of his part" during his performance, and become serious, as it is for a tragedian to*



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*attempt to juggle his walking stick on the end of his nose. Neither could accomplish the feat without destroying the artistic poise of both themselves and their audiences.*

The question now may arise suddenly: But is Farce ever good or legitimate Drama—meaning Drama as the inclusive term for all artistic dramatic production? Drama is a fictitious re-presentation, or concentrated *mirroring*, of Life. Therefore, whatever is coherently true and typically consistent with Life, is drama. Farce, though it belittles Life's seriousness and flounders ludicrously through conventions, is as pronounced a phase of human Life as any of the other dominating vicissitudes.

Therefore, the only question that need disturb is, Is it Farce or hodge-podge? Dramatic Farce should conform to all the rules and laws that regulate and govern all the other members of the artistic family. It should be consistent to type, it should have plot, a beginning, a middle, and an end, it should have a climax and an artistic conclusion. There is always a place for good Farce in the Photodrama.

Designating Drama as the dead center and rational being of all true dramatic composition, Farce represents the extreme left wing,

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barely within the borderland of rationality at all. To produce a good Farce, then, is a delicate task, for the least step out of bounds brings us into the realm of irrationality, of the unartistic, of incoherent absurdities, of vaudeville hodge-podge.

*(EXAMPLE 33.) The early, the middle period, and the larger per cent of current so-called "comedies"—mainly of the one and two-reel varieties—have been and are of an ill-bred, illogical, and inartistic class of entertainment that offend the taste and insult the intelligence of nine out of every ten who regularly patronize the Photodrama. The "laugh" is elicited chiefly through a clownish mixture of coarse allusions, rough-housing, custard pies, trick photography, and bodily contortions. The manufacturers call these mongrels comedies and photoplays, if you please. The supreme artistry of Charlie Chaplin, hung upon the rather slender thread of plot and somewhat disjointed string of incidents, barely brings his productions within the pale. "Tillie's Punctured Romance" is an excellent Farce.*

If Farce is exaggerated Comedy, what is Comedy?

Comedy is as much an abused term as Humor, and Humor is the rarest gift with which man is endowed. True Humor implies the exercise of good-humor, sympathy, perspicuity, discrimination, common sense, appreciation, wholesomeness, laughter. Being

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humorous means nothing more than being very human. What Humor is to Life, Comedy is to the Drama.

When we mortals are very, very human, yielding to all the little foibles, vanities, and idiosyncrasies of human nature, how very ridiculous we become in the eyes of our fellow creatures! To err is human; and to err without malice, without criminal intent, mayhap innocently, is Comedy.

From every aspect, Comedy is a very serious matter. In Comedy the situations and their complications are most amusing and humorous, but the characters are always serious. The more serious the characters are under the pressure of the situation, the more amusing they become. Again, Comedy is serious because it is so difficult. Most of us are unconscious comedians because we take Life too seriously and battle ludicrously with it, exactly as Don Quixote did with the windmills. It takes a natural humorist to see the comedies in Life, and to natural gifts he must add artistic ability to put Comedy in forms that unhumorous people may see the joke on themselves without suffering any inconvenience from it.

(EXAMPLE 34.) In "*A Self-Made Widow*" the heroine and motivating character throughout is a

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*saddened country girl who, unable to find a live lover, claims a dead man as her husband! The dead man is not really dead. Disappointed in life, he has pretended suicide and gone to a foreign land. Serious people and matters these! One is seeking wealth, the other trying to lose it; both are seeking Romance. The circumstance is rich in Humor. Nothing could be quite so serious and disconcerting as to have the hero return and find his "widow" in possession of his name and fortune. How serious for the characters, yet how amusing for the audience!*

A Comedy is a dramatic composition wherein the main and subsidiary situations are externally comic or suggest comic culmination.

In the Farce the characters *try to be funny* and the situations are mainly the result of their own horseplay. In the Comedy the characters must be serious, and the situations are made to appear to the characters as the unforeseen (by themselves) consequence of their usually extravagant acts.

The methods and mechanism of Farce and Comedy scarcely permit of a satisfactory combination of the two, which we might call Farce-Comedy. For the one deals with the external misadventures almost entirely, while the other demands the highest type of wit and the finest depth of feeling, making the

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Comedy a matter of nothing less than the finest dramatic art.

On the other hand, we may successfully combine Comedy and Drama. In other words, we may weave a few brilliant strands of Comedy through an otherwise somber and heavy blanket of Drama, and call it Comedy-Drama. Or we may take a palpably comic theme and solemnize it here and there with intermittent dramatic crises, like thunder and lightning crashing and flashing ominously across a laughing summer's day, to close with a brilliant sunset reflecting in the happy smiles of all concerned—and call it a Dramatic Comedy.

(EXAMPLE 35.) *"The Duchess of Dishwater"* is a very serious play concerned in the main with very serious matters for all concerned. But the Drama is brightened up at every other step with delicious Comedy. Mary Monteith is left a penniless orphan with but a dim memory of her aristocratic ancestors. She at length finds her ancestral estate. It is occupied by the new owners, the Dennis O'Briens. Mary is put in the scullery, and here the lovable, kind-hearted "Dinny" O'Brien, seeking surcease from the rigors of Society and his newly-rich termagant wife, finds her. "Dinny" brings in the constant comedy, brightening the play and the dramatic life of Mary. So much for a Comedy-Drama. Now let us consider a Dramatic Comedy: "Only Johnnie Smith" is a breezy, cocksure sales-

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*man whose brass and nerve at once and for all time give the Comedy verve to our play. But Johnnie mixes himself up in a very serious love mess of his boss's wife and an adventurer, that brings down several dramatic crises on his head fraught with calamity until the very end.*

Drama is not merely a picture of Life, it is more than that. Drama is *the re-presentation of the struggle for existence*. Drama without struggle would be spineless, hence it could not be Drama at all. Drama is always an entertaining concrete example of the "survival of the fittest"; therefore the character or characters who motivate our Drama must be fit to survive.

The dramatic idea is briefly summed up in a few words. Our Hero or Heroine, in the Beginning—the Introduction, the First Reel or Part of our play—in word, attitude, or action says, "I will!" As soon after this as possible, the Villain (or Circumstances, Obstacles or the other Characters) replies, "You will not! You can't! Impossible!" Our Hero accepts the challenge with, "Very well, we shall see! *I will!*" Thereupon we enter upon the second Act, or Part, into the Struggle for existence and survival. At the Climax, our Hero stands at the pinnacle of his effort, after the supreme struggle, and repeats to his van-

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quished Obstacles, "I will!" Their defeat is evidence of their reply, "You have." There follows a little lapse for Justice properly to distribute palms and sackcloth, and our Hero turns our way and we can read in his triumphant eyes, "I told you so." And we, the audience, murmur, "Yes, you made us hope this, but the outcome was always in doubt, and now we are satisfied!" There we have Drama.

(EXAMPLE 36.) In "*Alias Jimmy Valentine*" we find the ex-convict with a noble desire to reform facing a world with his brave "I will!" But the world, with the assistance of the professional criminal-snatcher, with equal positiveness says, "You will not! You can't! Impossible!" Follows the Struggle between the Law and its victim. It looks as if Jimmie was going to win out. Then comes the day when his sweetheart's little friend gets closed in the great bank vault. The safe must be opened immediately or the child will be suffocated. The Law is near at hand and knows but one man can do that; and he is the man they are after, Jimmy Valentine, escaped convict! Jimmy knows that his liberty is gone and that she will now know the truth—but a child's life is at stake. He saves it! "I told you so!" he cries. We hoped he was true blue, now he has satisfied us of the fact.

We all know him—this fellow, Melodrama—and his whole family. You have heard him

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vaunt what a handsome, virtuous Hero he is and what blood-curdling perils he has gone through single-handed to woo and win the woman he loves, who is the most beautiful Heroine with a lily-white soul and golden hair. He has had to vanquish, of course, the black-hearted Villain, who is incapable of drawing a pure breath of air. And so on. Life, Drama, and Humanity, a trifle over-drawn and over-done perhaps; but taken with a grain of salt as the only seasoning, and with an appetite for this sort of thing, it is an excellent repast now and then.

Too much and too frequent indulgence in Melodrama is certain to result in a dramatic indigestion or a vision as warped as the subject-matter itself, if the audience insists upon accepting it as Truth rather than Entertainment.

*(EXAMPLE 37.) It is an occasional delight to while away an evening hour or two following with breathless imagination the perilous deviations in the brilliant career of "The Virgin of Stamboul." Here is a heroine for you! Though born of low degree, she is marked by Fate and the aristocratic, devil-may-care hero for a veritable thirty-third degree at the end of the play. Her Fate, her virtue, and her life hang ever upon a slender thread of peril, yet so beneficent are her guardian angel, her guiding star, and the author, that a steel cable never did better*



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*service. Our heroine is charming, maddening, glorious, brave to the point of foolhardiness. Our hero is handsome, reckless, and even more brave. Our villain gnashes his teeth, plans murder as though it were afternoon tea, and is triumphant to all but the very last! Our scenes, situations, and action are a cool shade-tree, amidst the delicious haze of a drowsing mood. When extravagant ideals enthrall us, then we saddle our wishes and ride forth adventuring, rescuing the Lady of our Dreams, razing the Castle of Opposition and slaying the Ogre of Rivalry, all single-handed—and then perhaps are brought to a sudden "curtain" by the breaking of the Hammock, letting us down hard upon the bony lap of Life and Reality again! To repeat, Melodrama is excellent occasionally, like other pleasurable stimulants, which when indulged in too frequently endanger the stamina of the imbibers.*

Last of all comes Tragedy—the poet's darling and the public's bugaboo.

Stage a real hanging; advertise a bona-fide fatal accident; announce a disastrous fire that ruins a deserving man, destroys his treasures, burns up his family and stocks; post the fact that a woman will commit suicide at dusk by jumping into the river—a gaping public would out-flock available space! All classes, rich and poor, old and young, illiterate and educated, would pay admission if necessary. Many might remain at home, to be sure, some would come incognito, others would peep

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through the blinds. Such is man's morbid interest in a fellow-creature's supreme end.

On the other hand, either blandly or blatantly, if you will, announce the dramatic production of a Tragedy—a modern "King Lear" or "Romeo and Juliet" or "Medea" or "Beau Brummel" or "Old Heidelberg," and the crowd will go to the baseball-game in defiance. The crowd cannot stomach Tragedy. The law is the only thing that holds back the public from a bull-fight, while only a threat of the law possibly could make them en masse witness a modern Tragedy.

Tragedy strikes the sublimest key in the whole dramatic symphony. A race has not found its backbone nor a drama its stamina until it can produce Tragedy. Tragedy is the test of true excellence. Shallow-minded persons imagine that it is merely a death they are going to witness, whereas it is usually the *Life* of a noble soul, the endurance of a sublime principle, the supernal proof of character, in which the death of the hero is a mere incident. The theme is greater than the man. Wherever Drama has attained distinction, there one may find that Tragedy flourished.

*(EXAMPLE 38.) One of our finest towers of genius is built almost exclusively on a foundation of Tragedy. For Griffith saw the subliminal oppor-*

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picture people for motion picture production, is to divide hopelessly the author and motion picture Art. And such indeed has been the common implication, from within the motion picture ranks at least. At this point we must qualify our term "author" unreservedly. The writer who merely submits a plot and leaves the photoplay to others, is but a plotter after all. Our photoplay author must conceive and express his plot with *a full knowledge and vision of the screened play.*

All said and done, the artist-author is the foundation of the Photodrama, and the Photodrama is the bulwark of the Feature Photoplay.

Phases of presentation should not be as much a matter of the genius of producers, as they ought to be a revelation of the texture and color of the author's mind and emotions during the labor of conception. Thus it happens that brain-children are born under specific dominating stars of destiny, some to live happily, others to struggle tragically; some to saunter amidst fantasy, others to laugh or to be laughed at. Thus, while we may say that comedy and tragedy are accidents of mind and mood and viewpoint of the author at the time of the play's conception, yet it is equally true that these qualities become the *ruling*

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

*events* in the character and life and environment of the play henceforth to the end.

(EXAMPLE 29-30) *Two common conditions in the development of the photoplay have led to the utter destruction of more than one splendid basic dramatic idea or theme. One condition has been that lamentable want of mutual understanding between author and continuity writer, wherein the author, utterly lacking in technical knowledge, failed to express himself, and the rewriter in despair was compelled to make a "free translation" that twisted the original intent into a short-lived cripple. The other condition is that of the rewriter, director, or other producer with vaulting ambition egged on by a prolific triteness to improve upon the original story of the author. Custom has permitted him a free hand, and the author is scorned as the parent of the gnarled progeny that hobble across the screen. We have in mind an instance where a photoplay was built upon the benevolent activities of a charming old man known as "A Builder of Castles." The rewrite man saw an angle he liked better and on the screen the benevolent character was crowded quite into the shadow and the unsuspected villain with an original set of villainies took his place in the foreground. Yet strangely—to those who do not recognize the vengeance from tampering with destiny—the characters that had been created flesh and blood had shrivelled on the screen to animated puppets!*

Bear in mind that, in discussing the destiny of a play, we mean its lifelong spiritual endowments, not the mere physical accidents

## METHODS OF PRESENTATION

of environment and condition that happen to surround its beginning. A change from luxury to poverty, or vice versa, is a dramatic advantage. But a change from an inherently morose to an inherently happy mind, or from basic tragedy to basic comedy, or from prevailing evil to prevailing good, is inherently, basically and prevailingly *unnatural*.

Thus we may assume that the spirit of presentation must be identical with the spirit of conception. Plays are conceived, then, after a certain *genre*, and they preserve their species throughout their course by means of a consistent *treatment*.

*By Personalizing a Play, we mean the Preserving of its good Health, Safe-guarding its Principles, Keeping it true to Form, Enforcing Consistency from every fiber, until it becomes so Typically Perfect that it ceases to be objectively outside an audience, but rather subjectively a part of their own Experience.*

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PERSONALITY OF PLAYS

PLAY CHARACTER; FARCE; COMEDY; COMEDY-DRAMA; DRAMA; MELODRAMA; TRAGEDY.

UNRELIABLE, inconsistent, and disloyal people have few friends. A marked lack of sincerity in their make-up makes them untrustworthy. Such people lack poise and balance and scarcely command our serious attention. The basic trouble lies in the fact that they do not know what they are going to do themselves! In other words, they are moved by impulses, swayed by whims, and will wantonly face a cataclysm. Their life is not ordered by those great principles that inspire, restrain and guide human conduct in

## PERSONALITY OF PLAYS

moments of indecision and crisis. We say of such people that they are wanting in character and have no commanding *personality*.

Photodrama is founded on character, and each photodrama in its ensemble has a character, or *personality*, all its own. We might call this latter endowment its spirit, which is ever atune to its emotional well-being. And as there is an ever-present reflection of spirit in the flesh and word and deed of the normal human being, so should there be a like consistency of form and action to the spirit in which the drama-being is conceived and has that being.

*(EXAMPLE 31.) The analogy is equally true of all works of art, as it is indeed one of the principles of Art itself. The rollicking spirit of a Jordaens canvas is skillfully reflected in its darkest corner, where we see the ripple of coarse laughter even in the over-turned tankard. A single Byzantine column amidst the Gothic glory of Amiens Cathedral would shock our soaring imagination into a state of impiety. A false note or a vagrant motif in one of Wagner's fine orchestrations would jangle and decharacterize the whole sublime creation.*

In life, among our friends, in the very midst of our families, we have our Farceurs who carry the comedy of Life a little too far; we have our Comedians who refuse to take

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

Life seriously; we have our Comedy-Dramatists whom we find one day happy and the next day solemn; we have our Dramatists who battle Life seriously and who, we know, are going to win out in the end; we have our Melodramatists who are always over-acting Life and exaggerating its commonplaces; and we have our Tragedians, alas, of whom Life, with some untoward circumstances and environment, has broken the spirit, and who in the end must be crushed!

Yet in each case do we find our fellow man's destiny in a large measure prognosticated in the radiation of his personality, particularly when he has reached maturity. Reliable, rational men are consistent and *true to type*. Human nature cannot lie.

Thus in our *Farcical Play*, as in the antics of our circus clown, there is a *characteristic spirit* that must dominate and maintain throughout the farce, or the clown's "turn." Clownery becomes our *theme*, our point of view, our *raison d'être*. We employ the terminology, the atmosphere, and the antics of horseplay. For a brief period the audience is made to live the life of the buffoon.

(EXAMPLE 32.) *It is just as absurd for a clown to come "out of his part" during his performance, and become serious, as it is for a tragedian to*



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*attempt to juggle his walking stick on the end of his nose. Neither could accomplish the feat without destroying the artistic poise of both themselves and their audiences.*

The question now may arise suddenly: But is Farce ever good or legitimate Drama—meaning Drama as the inclusive term for all artistic dramatic production? Drama is a fictitious re-presentation, or concentrated *mirroring*, of Life. Therefore, whatever is coherently true and typically consistent with Life, is drama. Farce, though it belittles Life's seriousness and flounders ludicrously through conventions, is as pronounced a phase of human Life as any of the other dominating vicissitudes.

Therefore, the only question that need disturb is, Is it Farce or hodge-podge? Dramatic Farce should conform to all the rules and laws that regulate and govern all the other members of the artistic family. It should be consistent to type, it should have plot, a beginning, a middle, and an end, it should have a climax and an artistic conclusion. There is always a place for good Farce in the Photodrama.

Designating Drama as the dead center and rational being of all true dramatic composition, Farce represents the extreme left wing,

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

barely within the borderland of rationality at all. To produce a good Farce, then, is a delicate task, for the least step out of bounds brings us into the realm of irrationality, of the unartistic, of incoherent absurdities, of vaudeville hodge-podge.

*(EXAMPLE 33.) The early, the middle period, and the larger per cent of current so-called "comedies"—mainly of the one and two-reel varieties—have been and are of an ill-bred, illogical, and inartistic class of entertainment that offend the taste and insult the intelligence of nine out of every ten who regularly patronize the Photodrama. The "laugh" is elicited chiefly through a clownish mixture of coarse allusions, rough-housing, custard pies, trick photography, and bodily contortions. The manufacturers call these mongrels comedies and photoplays, if you please. The supreme artistry of Charlie Chaplin, hung upon the rather slender thread of plot and somewhat disjointed string of incidents, barely brings his productions within the pale. "Tillie's Punctured Romance" is an excellent Farce.*

If Farce is exaggerated Comedy, what is Comedy?

Comedy is as much an abused term as Humor, and Humor is the rarest gift with which man is endowed. True Humor implies the exercise of good-humor, sympathy, perspicuity, discrimination, common sense, appreciation, wholesomeness, laughter. Being

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humorous means nothing more than being very human. What Humor is to Life, Comedy is to the Drama.

When we mortals are very, very human, yielding to all the little foibles, vanities, and idiosyncrasies of human nature, how very ridiculous we become in the eyes of our fellow creatures! To err is human; and to err without malice, without criminal intent, mayhap innocently, is Comedy.

From every aspect, Comedy is a very serious matter. In Comedy the situations and their complications are most amusing and humorous, but the characters are always serious. The more serious the characters are under the pressure of the situation, the more amusing they become. Again, Comedy is serious because it is so difficult. Most of us are unconscious comedians because we take Life too seriously and battle ludicrously with it, exactly as Don Quixote did with the windmills. It takes a natural humorist to see the comedies in Life, and to natural gifts he must add artistic ability to put Comedy in forms that unhumorous people may see the joke on themselves without suffering any inconvenience from it.

(EXAMPLE 34.) In "*A Self-Made Widow*" the heroine and motivating character throughout is a

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

*saddened country girl who, unable to find a live lover, claims a dead man as her husband! The dead man is not really dead. Disappointed in life, he has pretended suicide and gone to a foreign land. Serious people and matters these! One is seeking wealth, the other trying to lose it; both are seeking Romance. The circumstance is rich in Humor. Nothing could be quite so serious and disconcerting as to have the hero return and find his "widow" in possession of his name and fortune. How serious for the characters, yet how amusing for the audience!*

A Comedy is a dramatic composition wherein the main and subsidiary situations are externally comic or suggest comic culmination.

In the Farce the characters *try to be funny* and the situations are mainly the result of their own horseplay. In the Comedy the characters must be serious, and the situations are made to appear to the characters as the unforeseen (by themselves) consequence of their usually extravagant acts.

The methods and mechanism of Farce and Comedy scarcely permit of a satisfactory combination of the two, which we might call Farce-Comedy. For the one deals with the external misadventures almost entirely, while the other demands the highest type of wit and the finest depth of feeling, making the

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Comedy a matter of nothing less than the finest dramatic art.

On the other hand, we may successfully combine Comedy and Drama. In other words, we may weave a few brilliant strands of Comedy through an otherwise somber and heavy blanket of Drama, and call it Comedy-Drama. Or we may take a palpably comic theme and solemnize it here and there with intermittent dramatic crises, like thunder and lightning crashing and flashing ominously across a laughing summer's day, to close with a brilliant sunset reflecting in the happy smiles of all concerned—and call it a Dramatic Comedy.

(EXAMPLE 35.) *"The Duchess of Dishwater"* is a very serious play concerned in the main with very serious matters for all concerned. But the Drama is brightened up at every other step with delicious Comedy. Mary Monteith is left a penniless orphan with but a dim memory of her aristocratic ancestors. She at length finds her ancestral estate. It is occupied by the new owners, the Dennis O'Briens. Mary is put in the scullery, and here the lovable, kind-hearted "Dinny" O'Brien, seeking surcease from the rigors of Society and his newly-rich termagant wife, finds her. "Dinny" brings in the constant comedy, brightening the play and the dramatic life of Mary. So much for a Comedy-Drama. Now let us consider a Dramatic Comedy: "Only Johnnie Smith" is a breezy, cocksure sales-

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

*man whose brass and nerve at once and for all time give the Comedy verve to our play. But Johnnie mixes himself up in a very serious love mess of his boss's wife and an adventurer, that brings down several dramatic crises on his head fraught with calamity until the very end.*

Drama is not merely a picture of Life, it is more than that. Drama is *the re-presentation of the struggle for existence*. Drama without struggle would be spineless, hence it could not be Drama at all. Drama is always an entertaining concrete example of the "survival of the fittest"; therefore the character or characters who motivate our Drama must be fit to survive.

The dramatic idea is briefly summed up in a few words. Our Hero or Heroine, in the Beginning—the Introduction, the First Reel or Part of our play—in word, attitude, or action says, "I will!" As soon after this as possible, the Villain (or Circumstances, Obstacles or the other Characters) replies, "You will not! You can't! Impossible!" Our Hero accepts the challenge with, "Very well, we shall see! *I will!*" Thereupon we enter upon the second Act, or Part, into the Struggle for existence and survival. At the Climax, our Hero stands at the pinnacle of his effort, after the supreme struggle, and repeats to his van-

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quished Obstacles, "I will!" Their defeat is evidence of their reply, "You have." There follows a little lapse for Justice properly to distribute palms and sackcloth, and our Hero turns our way and we can read in his triumphant eyes, "I told you so." And we, the audience, murmur, "Yes, you made us hope this, but the outcome was always in doubt, and now we are satisfied!" There we have Drama.

(EXAMPLE 36.) In "*Alias Jimmy Valentine*" we find the ex-convict with a noble desire to reform facing a world with his brave "I will!" But the world, with the assistance of the professional criminal-snatcher, with equal positiveness says, "You will not! You can't! Impossible!" Follows the Struggle between the Law and its victim. It looks as if Jimmie was going to win out. Then comes the day when his sweetheart's little friend gets closed in the great bank vault. The safe must be opened immediately or the child will be suffocated. The Law is near at hand and knows but one man can do that; and he is the man they are after, Jimmy Valentine, escaped convict! Jimmy knows that his liberty is gone and that she will now know the truth—but a child's life is at stake. He saves it! "I told you so!" he cries. We hoped he was true blue, now he has satisfied us of the fact.

We all know him—this fellow, Melodrama—and his whole family. You have heard him

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vaunt what a handsome, virtuous Hero he is and what blood-curdling perils he has gone through single-handed to woo and win the woman he loves, who is the most beautiful Heroine with a lily-white soul and golden hair. He has had to vanquish, of course, the black-hearted Villain, who is incapable of drawing a pure breath of air. And so on. Life, Drama, and Humanity, a trifle overdrawn and over-done perhaps; but taken with a grain of salt as the only seasoning, and with an appetite for this sort of thing, it is an excellent repast now and then.

Too much and too frequent indulgence in Melodrama is certain to result in a dramatic indigestion or a vision as warped as the subject-matter itself, if the audience insists upon accepting it as Truth rather than Entertainment.

*(EXAMPLE 37.) It is an occasional delight to while away an evening hour or two following with breathless imagination the perilous deviations in the brilliant career of "The Virgin of Stamboul." Here is a heroine for you! Though born of low degree, she is marked by Fate and the aristocratic, devil-may-care hero for a veritable thirty-third degree at the end of the play. Her Fate, her virtue, and her life hang ever upon a slender thread of peril, yet so beneficent are her guardian angel, her guiding star, and the author, that a steel cable never did better*



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Last of all comes Tragedy—the poet's darling and the public's bugaboo.

Stage a real hanging; advertise a bona-fide fatal accident; announce a disastrous fire that ruins a deserving man, destroys his treasures, burns up his family and stocks; post the fact that a woman will commit suicide at dusk by jumping into the river—a gaping public would out-flock available space! All classes, rich and poor, old and young, illiterate and educated, would pay admission if necessary. Many might remain at home, to be sure, some would come incognito, others would peep

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*(EXAMPLE 38.) One of our finest towers of genius is built almost exclusively on a foundation of Tragedy. For Griffith saw the subliminal oppor-*

## PERSONALITY OF PLAYS

*tunity that lay in Tragedy and dared give expression to his vision; and who shall say "The Birth of a Nation," "Hearts of the World," and "Broken Blossoms" were not always in the vanguard of all productions of their day?*

Tragedy is the oldest of all dramatic forms, it endures longest and it pierces deepest. The fine Tragedy reaches the most coveted field in all literary or dramatic achievement—that of the Epic.

*By reason of the Emotional texture of the Drama it is by nature a Creature of Moods. Thus each Photoplay is conceived in and enthralled by a given Frame of Mind that gives Beauty to treatment, Harmony to Theme, Color to Atmosphere, Power to Climax, and Poignancy to the General Effect.*

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ART OF TREATMENT

PERSONALITIES; PLOT-CHILDREN; THE PHOTOPLAY OF IDEA, OF THEME (COMBINATIONS), OF PROPAGANDA, OF CHARACTER, OF CHARM, OF FANTASY, OF ATMOSPHERE, OF DYNAMIC SITUATION, OF DRAMATIC CLIMAX, OF SATIRE, OF MYSTERY; INGENUE AND JUVENILE PHOTODRAMA; CAPTIONS.

THE personality of a photoplay—like the personality of a man—is the core of its inner being; the treatment of a Photoplay is the texture and cut of the outer dress. Treatment, or dress, should be consistent and harmonious with the photoplay's reflected

## ART OF TREATMENT

personality, if we are to see that essential personality to the best advantage.

(EXAMPLE 39.) *There are people who make the mistake of not properly clothing their personalities and persons, and so stumble through the whole pathway of life branded and ridiculed as a misfit, when a fitting choice and arrangement of habiliments and ornamentation might have altered and enriched their destiny. Thus the beauty of a young girl of the slums may be obscured by dirty rags; the erstwhile brilliant light of an aging man is allowed to flicker and become the butt of children because he permits his appearance to run down; a king accidentally garbed as a beggar would be shorn of homage and dignity.*

So each photoplay conception is prone to flourish best under a given garment of treatment.

(EXAMPLE 40.) *Take "The Clansman," which Griffith selected as the photoplay that was destined to take the mediocrity out of American Photodrama. Here was a plot and story that had many earmarks of mediocrity and triteness about it. As a novel, it had attained no classic heights; as a play it had been a failure. The subject reeked with partisanship. Obviously it was dangerous material to handle. Treatment alone could give it distinction. The temptation to do exactly as Dixon had done and treat the play as one of Dynamic Situation, with the thunderous and melodramatic doings of the Ku Klux Klan as the raison d'etre and pivotal factor, was*

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

most alluring. But Griffith and his vision were too great for that misstep. He saw his opportunity—how rare!—for Epic Treatment. Here he could envision the horrific glories of War, the heroism of the South, the tragedy of Reconstruction. In "The Birth of a Nation" we saw, felt, and pondered over them all. Griffith triumphed—as he has always continued to do—because he is a master of treatment.

Our plot-children are no exceptions to nature—they are born naked. During the remainder of their practical lives in the world—as they creep and walk toward maturity—clothes play an essential part in their effectiveness. If a plot is allowed to grow up wild and run throughout its course half clothed, it logically becomes a barbarian. If it wears a coat of too many patterns and colors, that is a sure token of unsound reason.

(EXAMPLE 41.) *We all have witnessed photoplays that began delightfully—in a fantastic mood, for example—and thereafter switched from one mood, or treatment, to another until we have been bewildered and wondered what the author was thinking about, or if the patchwork garment was the result of the production's being carried out at great intervals or under constantly changing emotional stress. "The Self Made Widow," for instance, opened its production as a photoplay of Humor. Suddenly it switched to a play of Character; then Fantasy seized the director; later he was caught in the web of Mystery, but closed the play as one of*

## ART OF TREATMENT

*Dynamic Situation.* The author had plotted it as a Fantasy, but the director so garbled his moods in the treatment that a very unusual plot became an unusually disappointing photoplay.

By a Photoplay of Idea we mean one that is constructed under the stress of a given idea. The given idea inspires, dominates, governs, and colors the treatment of the entire production. By Idea we may mean a conception commonly in the minds of most thinking people, or a powerful impression or conviction of the artist-author which he seeks to re-vision through his especial art-medium, or a conflict between two established ideas seeking a solution, or a poetic idea carried on into being. In other words, a Photoplay of Idea is concerned with the single task of metamorphosing an abstract theory into a concrete fact.

(EXAMPLE 42.) By way of illustrating the above, in the order named, we offer the following examples: (1) In "The Two Runaways" we find a demonstration of the common idea that there is no place like home, in following the adventures of a child and an old man who ran away from home, but were glad to return to it; (2) "The Poverty of Riches" shows the author working out in photoplay story one of his impressions and convictions; (3) in "The Greatest Thing In The World" we find a conflict of ideas in solution—which is the greater, Life

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*or Death—wherein a brute of a man whose chief pastime is killing, is vanquished by a woman with a passion for Life; (4) in "Just A Song At Twilight" we find a hardened man eventually softened to the point of regeneration through the emotional effect on his poetic fancy of a recurring air fraught with fine associations.*

A Theme Photoplay is one in which we take a specific subject and make it the text, as it were, of our play. We seize upon every technical opportunity and legitimate treatment and natural means of driving home our point. Yet, to remain truly artistic, we must deftly avoid sermonizing or even moralizing. Our theme must be in the essence of the story, rather than in the substance of treatment alone. We may choose any one of the potent psychological or emotional factors in human evolution as the subject of our dramatic discourse. It is well to note that amateurs are prone to attempt the Theme Photoplay, but only the finished craftsman can artistically render the theme!

(EXAMPLE 43.) *Thomas H. Ince climbed to great heights with a theme play once, called "Civilization." Griffith did an amazing Spectacle with man's everlasting "Intolerance" as the theme. Every year brings forth photoplays employing as their themes War, Vengeance, Hatred, and so on.*



## ART OF TREATMENT

When a Photoplay, through the exploitation of a theme that favors one class and condemns another, or that endeavors to foist a new doctrine upon the world, or the passionate belief of a minority or a majority upon non-believers, then our theme becomes Propaganda. Good photoplays may be built with propagandistic material, but because of their lack of universal appeal they violate Art's finest canon. Art is, that all—even the clod—may see revealed in terms of sympathy and tolerance through the vision of a few seers, the passions, the conflicts, the glories, and the ideals of humanity.

Educational propaganda is another matter, and has a legitimate place in pedagogy, but not in Art.

On first thought, the Play of Character would seem to be the most common treatment of all. Further consideration will reveal that far the larger number of "character Photoplays" are mere vehicles for actor exploitation. When a character carries the entire play along on his own shoulders—is the beginning, the middle, and the end of it—engrosses its every fiber and absorbs the emotional interest of the audience, without upsetting the traditions of good drama—then we have a Character Photoplay. A character

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

play implies the action of an extraordinary character—endowed with energy, imbued with ambition—incited to revolt or battling against some form of usurpation, in an *aggressive* conflict with circumstances. The average character is the average person, and is at best but a *part* of the story and does not sway the whole story incessantly by his will.

(EXAMPLE 44.) In "*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*" we can think of nothing else, even for days afterward, but that dual character. He obsesses the story and the audience. He is the story! "*Camille*" is the story of a single soul struggle.

The Photoplay of Charm must be nothing short of a charming photoplay. "Isn't it charming!" is a byword among sentimental people for theatrical mush and saccharinity, young people and animals, blondes and baby eyes. Granted that the idea is charming, fifty per cent of its success in a play lies in its treatment, delicate and winsome, pleasing and spell-binding.

(EXAMPLE 45.) In "*The Royal Pauper*" we find the heroine a sprightly little person who, like Peter Pan, believes in fairies because the fairy tales are real to her. Like Cinderella, she is a princess in the poorhouse; she is bewitched; some day the royal family will come and reclaim her. In fact, she is

## ART OF TREATMENT

*later taken to the home of a wealthy philanthropist whose love story we see worked out while she waits for Prince Charming. Here is a plot for a Play of Charm, which was produced successfully.*

Many Photoplays of Fantasy are also charm plays. As these plays are *frolics of fancy* on the part of the author, all depends upon the bent his imagination takes. By means of the fantasy a humdrum world is projected into the artist's innermost soul which, it is said, is haunted by actual angels and fairies, ghosts and devils, all of which are at his command.

(EXAMPLE 46.) Take "Prunella." What a delightful concoction of fact and fancy! "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea" was a rare fantasy wretchedly produced in its premiere. What a delicious revel of fancy is "The Poor Little Rich Girl!" Poe will yet take us through many fantastic chambers of horrors on the screen.

The Play of Atmosphere vies with Charm and Fantasy in its subtleties. Yet Atmosphere, like the other two, is a sheer matter of treatment. How often do we find the old, old plots repeated. We say and believe that they are entirely different stories; but as a matter of fact it is the same old plot with a new

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

treatment of Atmosphere, with a *different setting*, the pleasing, comfortable "Old Homestead" with a new coat of paint!

(EXAMPLE 47.) *As a drama "The Red Lantern" was a failure; as a study in atmospheric treatment it was remarkable. "Out of the Fog" was another example, this time a fine drama, rich in atmosphere. The former was altogether a matter of Chinese settings and customs; the latter, one of the desolate loneliness of the sea and its effect on character. In "Tess of the Storm Country" we are made to feel the primitive atmosphere through bleak barbaric scenes and life reacting on character.*

The secret of treatment lies in *the management of detail*. For instance, the Photoplay of Mystery is shrouded in baffling events and groping leads made misleading, though *logical always*, through treatment. And of course in the mystery play we start with the big deed—the murder, robbery, disappearance, or other enigma to be unravelled or solved—which is equivalent to the climax in the play of dynamic situation.

(EXAMPLE 48.) *Forerunners of the excellent opportunities afforded by Photodrama to achieve success in the field of Mystery are to be found in the sensational serials fabricated so as to be taken amidst delicious agony in weekly doses. "The House of*

## ART OF TREATMENT

*Hate*" was a classic of its species, not only concocting a minor mystery for weekly solution, but successfully suspending the major mystery throughout twelve or more episodes.

In the Play of Dynamic Situation, or the story with the walloping climax, we have the type that is most commonly attempted, perhaps. In that it is dynamic, physical phenomena play a large part in its emotional crises. What happens *outside* the characters to imperil their bodies is of larger significance than what happens *inside* the characters to jeopardize their immortal souls and mortal happiness. All events and crises are focussed or hinged on a series of dynamic situations, or possibly reserved for a tremendous smashing climax. So each little element in the play is piled up to resist or to be overthrown by the oncoming avalanche.

(EXAMPLE 49.) *An unforgettable example was "Shell 43," a war play that was filled with dynamic situations and was concluded with a tremendous climax in which an unexpected shell demolished the hero, after excruciating suspense made poignant through well-managed treatment. The crude melodrama, like "A Million Bid," was a physical structure throughout, with one bodily peril after the other culminating in a spectacular shipwreck, no material detail of which was omitted.*

## THE FEATURE PHOToplay

Of a much finer order, and the truly artistic thing as well, is the Play of Dramatic Climax. Dynamics concerns itself with the *physical forces of energy*, that which is theatrical, the sensational, the substance. Drama employs dynamics only as a means to an end. Drama concerns itself with *emotional potentiality*; it is the essence. How to depict the inner man in conflict, in agony, in ecstasy, in extremity, in triumph—it takes the artist to discover and employ the true symbols without the dynamic roar and bustle that obliterates the refined dramatic taste and touch. The sweeping, moving, soul-crushing or soul-soaring dramatic climax is what all dramatists should ever be seeking to attain.

(EXAMPLE 50.) *In this classification, a gem of the first water is "Broken Blossoms." Particularly in the scene where the Chinaman worships with beatific tenderness, the little waif of the gutters, and she accepts the homage with the sublime grace of a princess royal, her half-crushed soul quivering in the sunlight of its cherished dreams for a moment. And all the while we know, she knows, the Chinaman knows—and all hope with poignant futility against it—that the Brute will come in a blind annihilating rage and plunge them all into eternal darkness. Here is the Big Moment achieved amidst a hush, a half-gesture, a faltering look, a broken word. No falling bridge nor smashing locomotive nor thundering cannon could produce such a climax as that!*

## ART OF TREATMENT

The Photoplay of Satire will admit of greater development than it has received in the early days of Photodrama. Satire is a keen-edged chisel to be employed in chipping and planing away false overgrowths, unnatural bark and hypocritical veneer that now and again encrust society and obscure the Truth. It is only distantly related to the bludgeon of burlesque and the poker of travesty. The creator of Satire must be both a wit and a philosopher, for his humor not only must be sharp enough to pierce the deceptive shell of sham, but also his good sense must know life when he touches it and offer a remedy through antithesis for man's bruised credulity.

*(EXAMPLE 51.) There have been several satires on the Kaiser's magnanimity, but they all soon dulled their edge against our bones of incredulity or went too deep and shattered our nerve of good taste. Both of which are common dangers in satirizing. Griffith made a little satire early in his career, "The Reformers." We saw a town gone crazy on reform. The mother and father of a fine boy and girl are the leaders. They go to a convention, and while they are away the son is lured to drink and the daughter is filched. In reforming the world they had neglected their own home and children.*

Ingénue and Juvenile Photoplays are not mere accidents of selecting material, they are very especial incidents of treatment. A child

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

play is not a child play because a child is in it. The heart, the soul, the viewpoint, and the feeling of the child must be there too. Here, again, we may have the old, old plot, but it becomes a new and delightful friend if we succeed in dressing its body and adorning its soul as a child.

Bear in mind that there is the child's play for children, and the child's play for grown-ups. Both are difficult, and it demands art to avoid becoming silly or stupid.

(EXAMPLE 52.) *Grimm and Andersen were both geniuses who may be readily translated to the screen with all their wonderful effects because of the adaptability of trick photography. Theirs are stories for children that never pall. For many years the screen was deluged with so-called ingénue or ingenuous plays for grown-ups. Most of these were saccharine daubs, but now and again one of the myriad ingénues stumbled upon a fairly good vehicle—like "The Primrose Ring," "A Dream Or Two Ago," and "Seventeen."*

Combinations of treatment may be made effectively, but a single treatment must predominate, with but a coloring dash from any other mode of treatment.

(EXAMPLE 53.) *So in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," character predominates, with occasional dashes of mystery, atmosphere, and fantasy coloring the fabric constantly. "The Poor Little Rich Girl" was glowing with charm.*



## ART OF TREATMENT

Treatment is not accomplished by means of a broad brush filled with blinding color, but rather with a fine hair-brush dipped in natural tints and applied with a gentle touch until the whole tone of the picture is that of the designated treatment, although one is unable to put his finger on a single unblended splotch of color.

One of the most effective external instruments of Treatment is the Caption. In the hands of a clever and feeling painter of words, an occasional Caption will anticipate the desired effect, maintain it persistently, and bring it into full flower at the Climax. In thus employing the Caption, however, we must bear in mind that *it is never to be used at all if it can be dispensed with and not detract from the dramatic perfection of the work.*

(EXAMPLE 54.) Thus in a Dynamic Photoplay we sound the keynote at the outset in this Caption: "There YOU are, or anyone else who happens to fall into the path of his ambitions!" We know she will fall into his path, and already sense the big scene. The first part of a Play of Character ends with, "Yes, and the very first chance I get I'm going to run away and be bad, bad, BAD!" We know she will; the play is her character. And the caption, "And all the years thou hast been my invisible star to whom I have played and sung and smiled!" is redolent with atmosphere and feeling.

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

In conclusion, we assume that the subject matter of each photoplay inspires, develops, and admits of a distinct, definite and persistent mood, frame of mind, and treatment that brings out all its virtues, gives it a powerful poise, and mobilizes all its potentialities. The art of Treatment is the artist's fine sensitiveness for true color-values, without which the picture will lack chiaroscuro, be flat and *im-personal*, and thus fall short of Art.

II  
TECHNIQUE



*It seems scarcely Fair and Honorable to Squander Stockholders' Fortunes in the making of celluloid Sweet-Nothings or Photo-Foolishness and then Entice Millions of Earnest people over all the World to Waste millions of hours and Millions of dollars to have them flashed in their eyes. What we need are Fine Ideas Dramatized so Impressively that they Mend and Build and Glorify Life!*

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BIG IDEA

TECHNIQUE AS INTERPRETER; THE PURPOSE OF ART AND PHOTODRAMA; ETERNAL CODDLING: VISUALIZED EMOTION; POPULAR PSYCHOLOGY; THEMATIC REQUIREMENTS; IMPRESSIONISM; WHAT IS A BIG IDEA; ENDURANCE.

**W**E now pass from the realm of theory and discussion to that of the art and the processes of Photoplay Building which we shall call Technique. We have discussed more or less thoroughly *Why we do it at all*. Now we enter upon a concrete exposition of *What it is we do*. Both of these steps are essential

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

before we essay the final step in the process, *How it is actually done*. In the first step we are introduced to the materials; in the present step we learn the methods; and finally we combine the two in the practical operation.

Our Technique begins with the idea itself, and the idea begins with its two-fold relation to Drama and Audience.

It is quite possible to screen one mile of film without presenting a single thought, whole or in fragments, that is worth while; just as it is possible for certain people to babble an hour without saying anything! But Art, and its handmaid the Photodrama, are too sacred and fine mediums for the mere exploitation of vacuity and trash. Leave that kind of pish and patter to the Varieties and the gossips.

What is an idea? For our purposes, we may assume that it is something more than a single thought, a fleeting impression, a germinal concept or a passing whim. A Dramatic Idea is a very definite conception—either of the author, or of a small group, or of practically the whole of humanity.

(EXAMPLE 55.) Behind "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" is Blasco Ibáñez's masterful idea of German character. All through "Out of the Fog" we see the bitter evolution of characters upon which the fierce lonely tides have beaten for many years.

## THE BIG IDEA

*In "The Birth of a Nation" we are given at least the South's idea of the period of Reconstruction. In "Civilization" we see in a spectacular drama the common conception of Civilization.*

Taking next an idea in its relation to Photodrama, we shall find ourselves sooner or later facing a huge undertaking, particularly in respect to the Feature Photoplay. As it is expressively put in the provinces, we must have a "humdinger" of an idea. Our first consideration is the *endurance* of the idea. Will it stretch out over the tremendous expanse of one mile of film, throughout the entire story-life of our chief character? Can it move throughout on its own axis? Has it sufficient suspense to bridge over every gap? Is it rich enough to go its course without borrowing from outsiders? Is it comely enough to need neither padding nor major operations? Can it meet these requirements? It must endure to the very end of the footage—not hang on, but *stride ahead, carrying everything and everybody with it.*

(EXAMPLE 56.) *A single incident, though it be of the noblest and most dramatic material, may be all right for a Short Play. It may have the ingredient for a Feature Photoplay. But the Big Idea must be full-sized, if it is to be the ground work of a full-length play—that is not merely "strung out."*

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

Finally, we have the psychology of popular interest to consider. There always has been, and probably always will be a tendency on the part of timid and canny producers to coddle the public, under the impression that the general public fears Ideas. As a matter of fact, the public gets very tired of coddling, and its sensations are soon dulled or tickled out. On the other hand, the human mind by its very nature never tires of entertainment. The artist can make *any idea* entertaining, and drama *must be* entertaining. That is one of its prerequisites. The formula therefore is not to make the ideas fearful.

(EXAMPLE 57.) *What idea, per se, could be more fearful than "Intolerance?" What thesis could be heavier than "Civilization?" What sermon might be more formidable than "Experience?" What history could be more intolerable to the Northern mind than the Reconstruction depicted in "The Birth of a Nation?" What depiction of horror could transcend "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde?" Here are the very heaviest ideas possible, yet the public liked them because they were substantial; and they are numbered among the greatest commercial successes—because they were made entertaining.*

Many producers are like many writers, they want to—or lack the potentiality to do otherwise—put little or nothing in their plays and take everything out of them.



## THE BIG IDEA

Give the public what it wants, is a familiar slogan. *The public wants entertainment.* Conform to that want and you can give them *anything!*

*(EXAMPLE 58.) Half the melodramas are sheer sermons, most of them having the same text: If you would please God, keep in the straight and narrow path. And we see virtue rewarded and vice punished in a like manner with the ancient "Pilgrim's Progress." Could anything be more serious or more beautiful, more religious or more philosophic in idea, than "From the Manger to the Cross?" Could the miracle, legend, and saint idea of the Catholic Church be more strongly presented than in "Joan of Arc?" All were interesting because they were entertaining, and entertaining in these cases because they were presented through the technique of the theatre and not through the ritual of the Church.*

Therefore the dramatist must know what is in the public's heart. Knowing what is in its heart, he is on the royal road to its mind, where he will find a free market for all the worth-while ideas he can create. It lies heavy upon his and his collaborators' shoulders to make his ideas righteous, just, wholesome, and sane.

## DRAMA'S CONVERGING LINES

*The Alluring Continuity of the Photoplay Plot emanates from its Unceasing Struggle with that Agency which is ever trying to put a Sudden End to its Existence; namely, The Counterplot.*

### CHAPTER X

#### PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT

DEFINITION; MATERIALS; SOURCES; PROBLEM OF ORIGINALITY; WHAT IS COUNTERPLOT; DIFFERENTIATION; GERM, FRAGMENT, AND COMPLETE PLOT.

HAVING become convinced that the foundations of our future plots must be Big Ideas, we may proceed intelligibly to those processes of constructing the Plot Superstructure.

In the plot, the author lays *a plan* to represent the Big Idea in the smallest dimensions; so that the largest number of people will comprehend it, and by the means of an alluring series of inter-related incidents that cannot be dispensed with until the Cause of their beginning has evolved and solved their ending satisfactorily.

Plot involves the simple requisite that we stick to the *same idea* we start with, until we

## PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT

have brought it to a *satisfactory* solution and conclusion.

(EXAMPLE 59.) *The idea behind "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was to show, no doubt, the terrible consequences of trying to peer too brazenly into the mind of God, seeking the causes of Good and Evil. We should not have been satisfied until we saw what was the final result, when this idea was once launched on its plot career.*

An idea for a story, then, is not a plot, but a mere concept for one. A plot is never a statement, a fragment, a germ, one side of an argument, a slipshod opinion, a careless guess, a possibility. A plot is *a fight to the finish every time*; it is the finished plan of a perfect structure; it is the whole argument visualized and terminated; it is the disease the germ started, that overcomes the victim or is overcome by him; it is a positive solution; the audience and the characters may guess about their destiny, but the author, like the great Creator, knows the destiny of his creatures before his idea takes flesh.

Therefore it behooves the writer in every case to make sure that his plot is *complete*, that he finishes what his idea sets out to do.\*

\* A more or less complete study of the plot, its sources, methods for filing material, its operations, and its potentialities and values, may be found in the two works by the author of this volume, "The Plot of the Short Story" and "The Universal Plot Catalog."

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(EXAMPLE 60.) *Let us select an Idea at this point, which we shall endeavor to develop into a full-fledged Photoplay. Let us assume that true nobility of soul can never be vanquished! But here we have only the mere statement of a fact-of-mouth which proves nothing. We demand deeds in this dramatic, struggling life of ours!*

A plot, after all is said and done, is just a human syllogism. We say—or the Hero or Heroine through a certain positive act or word or deed says as much in the very beginning—“This is so!” No sooner has this positive assertion been made than Obstacles appear—the Villain, Fate, Circumstances, other Characters in the play—and set forth with equal vigor and positiveness a *contrary* statement; the very opposite, they maintain, is, must, and shall be so! A clash becomes inevitable. The Obstacles stand firmly in our Hero’s—or in the Theme Play, the good Cause’s—path, and the outcome of the contest is in doubt until the very end. We continue with our syllogism: Now if this is so (meaning what our Hero has said); and this is so (meaning what the Obstacles maintain) and a contest ensues;—therefore this (meaning a Struggle for Supremacy for the outcome) must be so!

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*(EXAMPLE 61.) Continuing with our Photoplay idea: As a symbol for Nobility we shall choose a Hero-character as protagonist. Nobility is simple, sincere, ardent, upright, and unswerving. We shall make our character likewise. We shall call him Peter. We shall have him pledge himself to some noble Purpose from which nothing can dissuade him. We must then raise up a Villain to try to confound him, we must place him amidst circumstances where his purpose seems impossible of carrying out.*

No matter how complex the plot may be, the steps are always the same, and exceedingly simple:

- (1) Sequence—wherein, in the Beginning, protagonist and antagonists set out determinedly to follow up their avowed purposes;
- (2) Consequence—wherein, in the Middle of the play, the protagonist carries forward an offensive warfare against his antagonists, with his victory hoped-for but ever in doubt;
- (3) Solution—wherein, in Climax and Conclusion, the protagonist emerges the conqueror.

Our problem today, tomorrow, and indeed for all future time, will be that of Novelty, of Originality. We do not mean that our author shall conceive new basic ideas; that is left to the province of scientist and philosopher. We do mean, however, that our author must provide something original, novel, or new in

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opening, development, ending, treatment, combinations of material, viewpoint, type, from one or other of the old ideas. What an infinite opportunity! For there are as many plot-possibilities as there are human beings, and each may and should be as different one from the other. The requirements are few: the finished story and play must be entertaining, human, natural, emotional, logical, balanced, appealing, and gratifying.

*(EXAMPLE 62.) Forty-nine stories out of fifty are love stories, built upon the world-old plot-idea that one person is loved by two of the opposite sex. This is made clear early in the story. It is indicated likewise, that one is more worthy; at least, one is made to become the audience's preference, and the author is thus bound to fulfill promised hopes. There may be other details, but the love motive underlies the main action. The quality of those other details decides its claims to originality.*

Now we arrive at an essential point of differentiation wherein the Photoplay departs radically in nature and construction from that of all other forms of creative writing. Well-balanced fiction languishes on Counterplot. *The Photoplay thrives on Counterplot.*

*(EXAMPLE 63.) The Short Story drives toward its Conclusion with clean, rapid strokes, losing*

## PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT

*power with every digression. The Novel moves more leisurely, culminating suspense by means of lengthy units which we call Chapters. The Stage Play accomplishes its dramatic effectiveness by means of the Act, with still less complication and shift of scene.*

Without Counterplot, Plot becomes inert and static on the screen. It is surprising how often this is the case in expert hands, where we witness multitudinous scenic pictures that may be distantly related to the story in hand but do not advance it toward its espoused end in any degree.

After all, Counterplot is a subsidiary to the Main Plot, and both together form the *Complete Plot*. The Main Plot comprises the main action, or the dramatically interrupted course of the Hero. The Counterplot comprises the several courses of the minor characters, including their interference with the career of the Hero.

When the main line of plot action and a subsidiary line of plot action clash together, we have a *Situation*. The vitality of a Photo-play depends on the number, brilliance, and novelty of its situations. Mere action in the plot is undramatic. *Reaction*, which always follows a good situation, is the very soul of drama.

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*(EXAMPLE 64.) In the action of our Hero's setting out to undertake a certain journey though it take him through places of unexampled scenic splendor, there is nothing dramatic about that. But the instant the Villain, or Obstacle, crosses his path we have a dramatic situation. Immediately there is reaction, or recoil, in both characters that brings fire to the story.*

It is the incessant interweaving of Counterplot with the Main Plot, then, that keeps the Photoplay vibrant with that tensility that must permeate skillfully constructed Photodrama.



*Drama is Born of Contrast; it thrives from Contrast; and it Ceases to be when it has Neutralized all Contrast through the Climax.*

## CHAPTER XI

### DRAMA'S CONVERGING LINES

CONTRAST; IN TERMS OF EMOTION; EMOTION VERSUS FEELING; CONFLICT, STRUGGLE, CONQUEST; DRAMATIC UNITIES; THE DRAMATIC SENSE; THE DRAMATIC OPPORTUNITY; THE DIAGRAM; THE EVER TIGHTENING LINES.

**C**ONTRAST is the salt of life; it is the most prolific source of human interest. Contrast taps the wellsprings of curiosity, wonder, amazement, surprise, incredulity; amusement; passion, anger, hatred; admiration, adoration, love; pity, pathos, and sublimity. In art they call it light and shade, or chiaroscuro.

Just so in Drama. If the incidents, the characters and the settings are all alike, there will be no conflict, no differences; *no contrast, no drama*. We even cannot imagine drama without contrast, foil, contrariety, opposite-ness, contradiction, and antagonism.

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(EXAMPLE 65.) *Sin makes virtue the sweeter; sorrow makes a virtue of happiness; instead of deadly normality, health becomes a treasure because of disease; beauty would become as common as mere flesh if some of us were not ugly; youth would not be the Golden Days if age never came; man's existence would lose more than half its savor without woman!*

Drama does not functionize, however, until two opposites are brought into active juxtaposition. And there lies eternal hope for the dramatist in the potential fact that for everything in life that represents the Hero, the force for good, the thing worth while, there is an opposing force somewhere that may appear in opposition any time. A large part of the dramatist's work is successfully to marshal contrasting elements in such a manner that they will brilliantly give battle, displaying original, important and powerful tactics.

(EXAMPLE 66.) *Our plot begins with a contrast in that the Hero is seeking something he has not got, and he contrasts his lack of happiness in not gratifying his desire with the happiness he would surely enjoy if he could realize it. It becomes more interesting by making the Heroine rich and the Hero poor. The Hero is good, the Villain bad. The real Heroine is plain, the tempting Adventuress is beautiful. We reveal the Heroine's true heart*

## DRAMA'S CONVERGING LINES

*by having her do charitable deeds among the squalid poor. On one floor of the tenement she finds a merry beer party in session, on the next a young woman dying. A child in the arid street picks up a rose she drops. She passes another thin, poverty-stricken child looking hungrily into a baker's window. And so on. Each incident strikes fire in the breast of the normal human audience.*

Incipient Drama then lies in Contrast. We want to bear in mind, however, that too sharp demarcations make for Melodrama and in-artistic work.

But Contrast is not the whole of Drama. Contrast is the most effective source of motivation only. It is the science of skillfully selecting and setting in array against each other human elements whose simultaneous presence inevitably brings about a conflict—of opinions, of ideas, of belief, of environment, of understanding, of ambition, of hope or fear, of physical force.

And note that we deem physical conflict the last resort of Drama. Nor must Drama always have its source and being in Spectacle amidst wealth and luxury and power.

*(EXAMPLE 67.) Breaking the heart of a beggar is of greater moment dramatically than wrecking the car of an emperor. No matter how big the dynamic catastrophe nor how great the rank of the*

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*character involved, it never can be more than a mere contributor or suspense-motor for something dramatic.*

We are concerned dramatically only with hearts, souls, happiness, regenerations, *change of character through struggle*. We deal with things in the main that no one in the audience could put his finger on, intangible things. We all together see, fight, and live causes, struggles, and effects. Be it an emperor, a capitalist, or a general, if he is not the Hero of our great hour of Dramatic Struggle, he is nothing to us. Our Hero, and his fortunes, are king and empire, all that matters, *all that interests* and enthralls us until his conflict is over. Such must Drama be.

Drama becomes futile if we the authors, and they the audience, do not *feel*. Therefore drama must speak *in terms of emotion*.

We must carry our audience beyond the bounds of mere interest, we must elicit *emotional interest*. The passion, the anguish, the hope and fears, the desires and the doubts, of our Hero, must become the emotional experience of the audience. The drama must first be interesting, then *appealing*—implying emotional presentation, which is the secret spring of all true dramatic action. It is possible that a play may be very emotional in and

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of itself. The question is, Does it produce reactive emotion, or feeling, within the breast of its audiences?

Now that we know something about what material is dramatic, we might be puzzled in knowing where to get such material and how to *recognize* dramatic material when we see it in the rough. Throughout our quest for material we must bear in mind that the countersign is Contrast in some form or another.

*(EXAMPLE 68.) The sudden knowledge of that which is extraordinary will strike dramatic sparks. But this is because the extraordinary stands out in sharp contrast to our ordinary every-day experience. Nobility rouses our dramatic sense always if we are human. This is because nobility is rare in contrast to the common acts of the common herd. Pathos is another gateway to Drama. The pathetic and the pitiable appeal because they are in direct contrast with our own happy or unconcerned state of mind and body. And yet if we were under the same ill star as that which was demanding general pathos, there would be no contrast, and consequently it would be tragic, but not dramatic to us.*

Because of the world's infinite diversity, it teems with Drama. In smaller things at least each man and woman is in contrast to his and her fellow. Humanity is perverse, and our friends and intimates surprise us in some particular almost daily. We surprise

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

ourselves now and then, and one period of our life is always a surprise to another, just as one generation is to another. Diversity, variety, contrast, interest—if human, personal and *emotional*, they beget drama.

(EXAMPLE 69.) *The news sheets of the day are filled in the main with the paradoxes of human events, the things which contrast with commonplace and so become interesting to the normal population. It is requisite that the extraordinary be Novel if it is to become contributive dramatic material. It is extraordinary that a man will kill, rob, or betray, but if he commits these crimes in the ordinary way, it is only of passing interest to the multitude. Crime is still more common in Drama than in Life and, like most other things in Life, if it is too obvious, our interest palls.*

Dramatic material, then, must contain contrast intensively in certain well-defined particulars. News, although a record of events in contrast to the humdrum experience of the majority, is not essentially dramatic. It almost always contains some dramatic tidbits, however. Most news is parochial and narrow; it appeases the curiosity of a town, a county, a city, or a country. Dramatic news is catholic; it must appeal to the *heart of humanity*, and for that reason its language is of the emotions, which is a universal tongue.

## DRAMA'S CONVERGING LINES

It is further demanded of dramatic material that it be Novel.

(EXAMPLE 70.) *All murderers murder. Robbers rob, forgers commit forgeries, lovers love, and soldiers fight. All of which is quite obvious. Kings rule, subjects obey. To be interesting, any of them must functionize in a contrary way. So must the dramatist be original.*

Art abhors mediocrity; it bestows laurels on the genius. The genius is he who does ordinary things in an extraordinary manner. Geniuses are the contrasts to ordinary talented persons.

Dramatic material must be common to the emotional being of all men, but rare as an actual experience to the few. It may be that which is only desired, or that which is dreamed, or that which is abhorred.

(EXAMPLE 71.) *Let us scan the newspaper in search of some dramatic fragment: "The War Seen by a Poet"—could there be greater antithesis, than War and Poetry? "Innkeeper's Child Is Now a Peeress"—peers and innkeepers as a class are usually at the opposite swing of the pendulum. "Mollie Fancher, 50 Years in Bed, Dies"—how contrary to common experience of a night spent in bed, to find one spending a lifetime there! "Higher Wages and Unhappiness"—our interest is aroused at this seeming paradox. "Mrs. Blank Ordzin a*

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*Mulatto, Relative Says*"—here is a case where white is called black! "*Bishop's Old Home Crime-Scene*"—virtue and vice are dramatically linked together!

Writers must constantly cultivate the *dramatic sense*. The dramatic sense is the faculty of discerning the paradoxes and the antitheses of human experience and translating them into units of conflict. It is the work of the dramatist so to organize this conflict that it becomes a single supreme struggle that penetrates and elicits the emotional understanding of the audience.

(EXAMPLE 72.) *Let us reiterate that it is not the pompous coronation of an emperor that is dramatic. Here is no drama, no antithesis. It is a matter of course that emperors are crowned amidst pomp. The royal deed of a cobbler—humble in state but the deed crowned with majesty! Not the mere doings of men, but the fine deeds of humanity are what we seek; not the daily run of things, but the exceptions that prove the rule; the occasional glimpses of the inside of man as he reveals it on the outside in moments of passionate intensity.*

Drama demands that the dramatist face and *fight out* issues, and never that he avoid them. In the issue through conflict lies our opportunity. The more impossible the issue seems of solution, the more intense the conflict and the greater the credit earned by the dramatist.



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(EXAMPLE 73.) *It is a temptation for the writer to get his characters into the most difficult "scrapes." As in life, it is easy to get in trouble, but a serious problem to get out of it, gracefully at least. Readers and audiences are frequently trailed through a boring quantity of details and causes leading up to a splendid and seemingly baffling complication. The audience sits back prepared for a treat. There appears on the screen a caption to the effect: "After the Battle Was Over Desmond Emerged the Victor." No battle was shown. It was the kernel of the story. The writer has side-stepped the real issue.*

The so-called Dramatic Unities of Time, Place, and Action are almost thrown to the winds by the Photodrama. To construct a Photodrama so that it may be enacted as nearly as possible within a single stretch of time, within the limits of a single place and confined to a single action, is to follow a *naturalistic* method that may intensify realism, while it is of little or no help in establishing conviction. Photodrama thrives on *multiplicity*. However, it has established unities of its own that must be observed.

(EXAMPLE 74.) *In order to permit the mechanical progression of the Photoplay we are compelled to change the scene constantly—every few seconds. Our chief character may be in New York; we may see the villain leaving India, motivated by an oath to kill him for robbing an idol. His mother may be taken*

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*ill in Vermont, whither he must go. The heroine needs him at the same instant, having been taken prisoner by bandits in Mexico. We return to the villain again, now in mid-ocean aboard a steamer, learning from a passenger just where to locate the hero. And so on. Months or a year may elapse.*

Our scenes may be scattered over the earth. Our episodes may interpolate events that happened before the birth of the hero and show him at many ages taking an active part. Nevertheless, we must have a *single action* by knitting and welding the whole together. There is but a single story to tell: That is the story of the Hero—or the Theme—doing in the end what it sets out to do in the beginning. Here we operate the law of the Plot, and demand that everything must agree with our purpose and be essential to its being, or be eliminated. After all, this is but dramatic promise and its fulfillment. Drama requires a balanced account.

(EXAMPLE 75.) *In "Just a Song at Twilight" the action is contemporaneous. Our theme is regeneration through reminiscence. In order that the young people may be forgiven and accomplish what they set out to do—which is to be married—the erring father must hear the old song at twilight that his sweetheart used to sing to him thirty years before. He is lulled to sleep with the old life at the*

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*threshold of his consciousness and relives the old life in a dream. He then realizes, as he stands by in the guise of his own spirit seeing his acts in their true light, what a great wrong he has done many people, particularly the man whose son is now seeking his daughter in marriage. The last reel of the play deals with the father's atonement and reparation of the wrongs he has committed. Thus in Reel One the action takes place in one location. In Reel Two we go back thirty years. In Reel Three and Reel Four each, there is a lapse of five years; and in Reel Five we advance the action again to the present time. Practically two sets of characters take part. In this play our plan is more to accomplish the purpose of the Theme than that of the chief Character. So even the old-time Unity of Character is violated.*

We now arrive at a very important process, the mastery of which on the part of the student will enable him to construct a drama—providing he already has a plot—with little or no difficulty.

The first step is to draw an equilateral triangle. Then from the base to the apex draw a straight line.

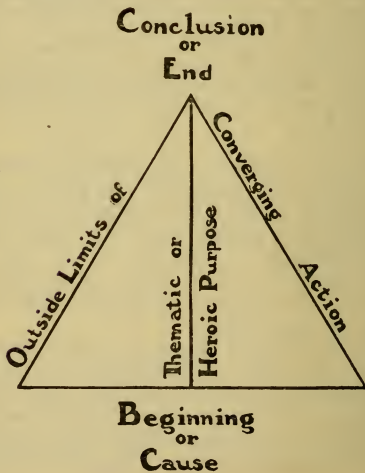
We now have a diagram of all dramatic energy and action. The base line represents the Beginning of our plot or story. The Apex represents the Conclusion or End. The line in the center from base to apex, represents the line of Thematic or Heroic Purpose. It is the

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purpose of the theme or the chief character to go from the base line, or Cause, straight to the apex, or avowed Goal of his purpose.

We may observe that from the instant the two side lines—which shall represent the outer bounds of story Action—start moving toward the apex they begin *drawing closer together*.

(EXAMPLE 76.)



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Likewise in every aspect of their progress they exert surficial pressure and *resistance* upon the central line of action. Every instant sees them all nearing the apex of Solution. We take especial note of the obvious fact that these lines are doomed to coalesce and can never be parallel. We note that when the three angles of the triangle are placed together, they are mathematically *complete* and structurally perfect.

So in Drama. The hero sets out to reach his goal, but pressure from the side lines hampers his progress at every step. The pressure increases as he nears the apex, near where it is so great that something must break in order that he may reach his goal. As the moment of the inevitable Big Collision approaches, our suspense increases. We call the Collision the Climax. We obtain Suspense automatically by drawing the converging lines tighter. The apex reached, the Hero must go *outside the story* triangle in order to continue. The Hero is satisfied, and the audience must feel gratified. That is the whole of Drama.

In other chapters to follow, we shall further illustrate the mechanics of the dramatic principle.

*Contrast is the basis of all Conflict, therefore Contrast is the Right Wing of Motivation; Desire is the Left Wing. With these two Pinions engrafted in its tissue, the body of a Plot is bound to Soar in Flight.*

## CHAPTER XII

### LIFE-GIVING MOTIVATION

PLANTING MOTIVATION; CONTRAST AGAIN; THE PART OF INTEREST; ORGANISM VS. ORGANIZATION; THE SNAPPY BEGINNING; THE EFFECT OF COUNTERPLOT; ACTION AND MOVEMENT; REASON FOR THINGS; HAPPENINGS; COMPRESSION; DEEDS; THE LEAD MOTIVATES; EXPECTATION; IDEA IN ACTION; APPEAL TO SENSATIONS; ACTION AND REACTION.

**I**N Drama, actions are considered more or less as accidents. In Photodrama, they take on added significance because of the mechanical necessity of practically all phenomena being *visualized in substance and motion*.

The real incidents and bulwarks of Drama are *deeds*. A deed is the spiritual core, the mainspring, of possibly a thousand-and-one consequent actions. All deeds have dramatic

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significance, not because they set loose a swarm of actions, but because they vitally concern the spiritual and emotional life of humanity.

(EXAMPLE 77.) *In our proposed story, which we shall tentatively call "Peter the Great," there would be no Drama and therefore no story, if Peter went along his way quietly fiddling among the country folk. That he loved his sister better than anything else in the world, though he secretly desired a musical career, with all the action that accompanies both, is scarcely interesting. But let a dastardly deed be committed, like the betrayal of his little sister, incidentally jeopardizing his career, and the quiet scene is instantly galvanized into Drama.*

In Photodrama, then, we endeavor to plant as early as possible, not only a reason for the idea's dramatic existence, but also engines of dramatic power sufficient to propel it through a seething sea of action to the desired port. There is a reason in God's Plot for the existence of every man, woman and child in creation. There must be a very high-powered reason indeed for the exploitation of one character among a million human beings in a single dramatic creation.

Our first ingredient of motivation is the introduction of a *strong* heroic Character, or theme, in whom is implanted a *desire*, or *Pur-*

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*pose*, as powerful as—or even more so than—the Character or Theme themselves. Of greater motor merit, however, are the Contrasts that are introduced at an early moment and during successive intervals thereafter, that cause *opposition* to the desire or Purpose, that promote *Conflict*, that induce *Suspense*, and sustain Character through Struggle.

(EXAMPLE 78.) *Thus in our photoplay of Peter: Peter's desire to attain fame through a musical career is opposed by the villain's betrayal of his little sister. Peter enters into conflict with the villain, and suspense follows naturally as we await in doubt the outcome. Peter's character is more than sustained throughout.*

We come upon our old acquaintances, Counterplot and Contrast, in a new guise which, in relation to motivation, we shall call *Re-action*. Desire leads to a resolution, resolution to the deed, deeds to reaction. A great desire—such as the hero of a story should manifest at the outset—indicates a store of leashed energy. At once we attract the audience's interest by rousing a counter desire to follow the Hero to the gratification of his desire. Thus we have a double *motive*—one a reason for beginning the story, and the other a released energy that is bound to continue it to its desired end.



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There are three grades of activity in a Photoplay, that should be differentiated if the dramatist would be sure in his touch: (1) Motion, which is the mere phenomena of "breathing" nature (such as blowing leaves, people outside of the play passing, smoke rising); (2) Action, which is the specific activity that interprets the thought, the emotions, and the spirit of the play (such as laughter, tears, gestures, sighs); (3) Movement, which is the progressive Plot undercurrent, the spirit and idea and message of the play itself. There must be motivation generated to carry all these along progressively.

Photodrama is a clash of Ideas, to be sure, but what we must *see* are men and women struggling for those Ideas.

The Plot takes care of motivation in seeing to it that everything that is done is the *result* of a logical and sufficient *cause*. Furthermore, all dramatic results continue to be causes for further effects until the last result of the whole of it—the Conclusion itself—has been reached.

(EXAMPLE 79.) *In the case of "Peter the Great," it is Peter's secret desire to become a master of music that results in each thwarting step's becoming more and more dramatic. The betrayal of his little sister is a result of this Cause. But this leads*

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*to Peter's having to spend his little hoard that meant his trip to Paris, to save his sister's betrayer from prison to save her life. Releasing him from prison was the cause of all his further reappearances on the scene, bringing misery with him.*

Even the audience has its share in the successful motivation of a Photoplay. This means that the desires and apprehensions of the leading character must be implanted and duplicated in the heart and mind of the audience so that it puts itself unequivocally in the hero's place. Its interest forms a roller-bearing of motivation. We now arrive abreast of one of the laws of good dramatic composition, which is, that *the Lead must motivate*. In other words, the Hero or Heroine must seek at any and all odds to attain his or her desire, and all that follows is the result or reaction from this great Cause. Unless it be in Tragedy, the hero or heroine must never fail. *Only one can win*—the one who has been given the Lead.

Creating *expectation* is a prime requisite of interest, but all expectation thus aroused by the dramatist must be fulfilled by the dramatist. Wherein we have a simple line of motivation for all writers to follow. In Life we expect great things of our Heroes and follow their careers with engrossing interest. In

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Drama we must create Heroes of whom the audiences shall expect great things, and then justify this expectation by so motivating the Hero's career that it will be followed with breathless interest. The greater his struggles, the greater the interest.

Drama and Photodrama differ from static Fine Art in that the finished product is not fixed and immobile. Drama—unlike Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture—can be apprehended only by progressive units in which the beholder must follow, *move, and live*, the essence of the play. While static Art is a fine organization of selected materials, Drama and the Photodrama are intensive *organisms* of progressive life.

Motive is an Idea in action, a logical Cause working toward an inevitable Effect. Ideas are worthless in Drama and Photodrama unless visualized in the stress of demonstration. Philosophy treats of the nature and beginning of ideas; Drama reveals their motivation and end.

*In no case is Drama Constructed of Independent Incidents; it is built up of Events not only closely, but Progressively and Cumulatively, Related by Ties of Blood and Bone; what happens to one Member affects the Fate of All; that which follows after is always one of the Children of that which goes before, and they all bear the same name—Consequence.*

## CHAPTER XIII

### SEQUENCE, SUSPENSE AND CONSEQUENCE

PRODUCING IN SEQUENCE; THE SURPRISE; CHRONOLOGICAL AND LOGICAL SEQUENCE; THE SNAPPY BEGINNING; COUNTER PLOT; INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCE; INTEREST; THE OBSTACLE; SUSPENSE BREEDERS; THE LINE OF LEAST RESISTANCE.

**D**RAMA consists simply in the sowing and the reaping of events in an interesting span of life, interspersed with periods of anxious waiting—which we call suspense—and wondering whether things will turn out well or ill. It is “just one darn thing after another”—with the accent on the “darn.”

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There are three kinds of sequence, a thorough understanding of which is essential in dramatic construction.

(1) The commonest form is *Chronological Sequence*. This is the simple arrangement of events in the order in which they happen. There need be no particular relationship between the happenings, there may be little significance to the happenings, which scarcely warrant the name of "events." The one law that governs them is that they be arranged successively, according to *time*. Because of the multitude of mere chronological happenings and their humdrumness, they should be taken sparingly and in small doses by the dramatist.

(2) Next we have the *Logical Sequence*. Herein we narrow down the common happenings of life through a process of *selection, choosing* related events and applying the law of the syllogism to them. Because *this* has happened, it follows, logically, that *that* must happen! It is not essential that these events happen chronologically at all. We come again within the domain of Cause-and-Effect. The Cause may happen years before the Effect, with a million chronological happenings in between. We may not learn of the Cause until long after the Effect has become evi-

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dent. We may project what follows the Cause into a chronologically unknown future. Instead of Time's being our law, it becomes Reason. We are obeying Logic not chance. Anything that can happen within reason may be called Logical Sequence.

(3) *Dramatic Sequence* draws the limits many times closer. Dramatic Sequence may employ chronological order in point of time only, and it *must always* be in Logical Sequence. In Dramatic Sequence we select a *single great event* and then exclude all other incidents and happenings in the whirl of the world that can *possibly* be spared in its culmination. Dramatic Sequence may amble in and out of Chronological Sequence at will. This is especially true of Photodramatic Sequence, where our favorite method is to develop entire dependent Sequences all by themselves, or to portray incidents that are happening simultaneously, or to depict thoughts in the mind of characters of incidents that *might* happen. All of which are in Dramatic Sequence as long as they *promote* the movement and carry it steadily *towards* its goal.

(EXAMPLE 80.) *Chronological order involves the infinitesimal and negligible incidents, for in-*

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*stance, that may befall the actor, like the ringing of an alarm clock, rising, dressing, and breakfasting, that fill the hours with tedium. When the actor learns his part in the play, he excludes all else and is obliged to take it up in a Logical Order, or it would become hodge-podge. But when the actor becomes the Character, then he must become part and parcel with the Dramatic Sequence. He steps out of humdrum present-day life into the Sixteenth Century! Later he appears among moderns as the ghost of the Medieval man he was, and finally he passes on into the limbo of dead souls. The drama over, he and the audience step outside the author's completed creation into the dull chronological order of things again.*

Constructing chronologically—that is, having dramatic events happen in their *natural* order and shorn of superfluous data, of course—is after all the safest, soundest, and usually the best way. Then events may happen, one after the other, naturally, without the subterfuge of explanation or narration (having to “tell” the audience how it all came about). Narration is foreign to the Photodrama; *action is its natural medium*. It requires great skill to go forward and backward at the same time! The Photoplay should proceed as nearly as possible as any interesting, live mortal would go his way—striding *forward* through life's events.

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If we do not set down incidents in their chronological order we shall be obliged to halt at a psychological moment, or turn back when the blow-up is past, and offer lengthy explanations for our departure from the straight and narrow path.

*(EXAMPLE 81.) We repeat, that Chronological Order may be ignored if in going "behind" the present time, we may continue to progress. In the first place we must make our step backward a necessity. In the second, it must leave no gap in the interest of the audience nor start any separate plot or story. In "Just a Song at Twilight" the father refuses the hand of his daughter to the son of his traditional enemy. They prepare to elope within the hour. It is then that he dreams again his old life. Just before he does so, the boy has discovered her father's guilt in putting his father into prison. He starts back with murder in his heart. In the interval of an hour the dream, filling three reels, takes place—as dreams do. He finds the old man repentant after the dream. The continuity has never been interrupted in its forward trend.*

There is a legitimate tendency among Photodramatists to open their plays with a bang. In other words, they begin the play right in the midst of a Situation. While evolution of a Situation is slower, it should never become tedious. The problem to be met by those who open up in the midst of fire, is to



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explain how things became so hot and to get back to Sequence gracefully.

*(EXAMPLE 82.) In "Bonnie Annie Laurie," the story opens with Annie finding and rescuing the derelict Stranger. The Stranger has lost his memory and does not find it again until very near the end of the play. Then as it all unfolds to him, how he became the Stranger, the audience goes back with him two years in his "vision." The play had arrived at a point where it could move no farther forward until the mystery was solved.*

Too much material and counterplot involves lengthy introductions and consequent lengthy disposals of characters and their acts all through the play, involving great danger of muddling the sequence to the point of confusion and turning suspense into impatience.

*(EXAMPLE 83.) Photodrama is built upon purposes. There is the Great Purpose of the Hero; and everybody and everything that is introduced thereafter have their purpose, which they must do their utmost to carry out. Their purpose in the main is counter to the Great Purpose of the Hero. All these purposes must be skillfully interwoven; so that the plot will not only go forward, but go forward rapidly and smoothly.*

The movement must ever proceed forward toward the bitter or pleasant end, each action fitting perfectly without showing the joints.

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In Photodrama, this becomes a fine art because of the multiplicity of actions split up by Photoplay scene technique.

Suspense follows a dramatic interruption of Sequence. Suspense is simply deferred hope of a successful issue mingled with fear of an untimely termination of the Sequence. Suspense is *doubt* of the outcome of the Struggle of the contending dramatic forces, but never assurance one way or the other. The moment that doubt enters the dramatic doorway, assurance flies out of the window and the audience is filled with suspense. The Conclusion must remain in intermittent doubt to the very end. Therefore, in doubt we have our most valuable suspense-motor.

Suspense is created by the simple means of interposing a legitimate Obstacle in the forward path of the Hero in pursuit of his great Purpose. Sometimes the Hero unwittingly creates his own Obstacle through an act that precipitates an unforeseen *complication*. Again, he may run athwart Counterplot unexpectedly.

(EXAMPLE 84.) In "*Bella Bids Herself Good-bye*," we have a girl giving up her real identity of a shop girl and going forth with her savings to become a real lady. This is the Great Purpose. She meets a seeming real lady on the train. There is a

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*wreck and Fate gives her the identity of the lady. But the "lady" is a notorious crook pursued by the police. The audience is implanted with suspense at this unforeseen complication. Bella does not discover the truth until she has further compromised herself. She has unexpectedly run athwart the Counterplot. The man she loves proves to be the detective! Here seems to be an insuperable Obstacle.*

We should not try to eliminate the Obstacle too hurriedly. The Obstacle is like a trump hand in euchre, in which the right bower should not be played until every trump has been used with telling effect.

In seeming futility lies the best suspense. When it seems as if the Hero's plight renders his Purpose inextricable, when his case seems hopeless, when peril seems imminent, when doom seems unavoidable—then suspense is most poignant and effective. Then also is the dramatist's task of plausibly extricating himself and his Hero without the trite aid of Providence and Fate put to its finest test.

Suspense will not hold effectively unless fostered by relevant contributive material. We must hold our audience in suspense for what is really to happen until the very last minute—then give it what we have made it hope for and what has now, through our skill, become inevitable.

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(EXAMPLE 85.) *The more common Suspense Breeders are: Interest, Sympathy, Expectancy, Anticipation, Hope, Imminence, Change, Surprise, Doubt, Disappointment, Fear, Danger, Peril, Crisis, Revelation.*

We might call Consequence, *Logical Reaction.*

(EXAMPLE 86.) *We have the old case of the syllogism again, with which Drama is ever concerned, dramatically. If we do certain things, it follows as night the day that certain other things will happen. To put one's head in a lion's mouth, to slap a real man in the face, to make love to another man's wife, to commit a crime—the consequences are logically obvious. We draw an invincible character for our Hero and set him forth against seemingly insuperable Obstacles. The Logical Reaction is a Conflict worth while going to see—in a Photoplay.*

The Consequence is the reward for good deeds and the punishment for misdeeds. If dramatic details of character, circumstances, and potentiality are well drawn early in the play, an intelligent audience will intuitively sense consequences afar off from the drift of the Sequence, and feel in advance all the delightful thrills of anticipation. Planting this foresight will give an added zest to the popular enjoyment of a play that will mark the author as a master craftsman.

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*(EXAMPLE 87.) Thus we make Peter the Great truly great, in mind, body, and spirit, at the start. We make clear his invincible love for his little sister and his unquenchable desire for a career. On the other hand, we draw a villain of great physique, capable of unspeakable cruelty and consummate revenge. Then set the villain after the sister and we can sense the quality of the consequences long before they happen.*

Thus, the first part of our Photoplay—as we shall see later—consists of establishing Character, winding up the Movement, and building Contrasts. The second Part of the play sees these all released and the Consequence—though not exactly the result—is obvious, if the work of Part One has been well done. Again the law of Contrast gets in its good work.

*(EXAMPLE 88.) Everybody knows that if two certain Colonels in Kentucky meet, they will try to shoot each other. Just so, must the dramatist make his characters and their motives so well known to the audience that "everybody" in the audience realizes that something big is going to happen when they clash.*

Inconsequential action and movement are bound to result in an inconsequential play. Audiences expect things to happen all the time. If the writer chooses the line of least

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resistance and avoids happenings, he side-steps Drama itself. People in everyday life who do not face and fight manfully the consequences of their deeds and misdeeds, we call slackers. They are valueless citizens and uninteresting mortals.

It is not sufficient that we must have a reason going before every action and movement, but that Reaction and Counter-Movement, or a Consequence, be inevitable.

Conflict is the keynote of Drama; Consequence is the forerunner of Conflict; Contrast is the source of Consequence.

*The Sentence of Human Existence is profusely Comma'd with Coincidences; it is frequently Punctuated with Crises; but it has only One grand Period—the Climax of All Experience.*

## CHAPTER XIV

### COINCIDENCE, CRISIS, AND CLIMAX

NECESSITY OF CUMULATIVE EFFECT; ESTABLISHING COINCIDENTS; CRISIS INCOMPLETE; DANGERS OF COINCIDENCE; CRISIS AND SITUATION; ANTI-CLIMAX; THE PUNCH; IMPORTANCE OF CLIMAX; HARMONY; BEGINNING WITH THE CLIMAX; APPEALING TO THE SENSATIONS; PREPARATION FOR THE EVENT.

**C**OINCIDENCE is a fearful thing when misused. If, however, Coincidence is correctly apprehended—its vices recognized and its virtues realized—it may become one of the most valuable devices in the dramatist's whole kit.

It is the common opinion that Coincidence is extremely rare in life. Facts prove the contrary is true. If this is so, Coincidence is not an unnatural phenomenon.

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(EXAMPLE 89.) *The average person encounters coincidence daily, surely several times a week. We dream at night and get a letter from the person the next day. We go to a distant city and meet an old friend on the street. We find ourselves appointed on a committee with the person we dislike most in the world. We find one day the object of our charity none other than a woman who once looked down on us in her haughty wealth. We pick up a newspaper the first time in a month and find the death of a dear distant friend among the obituaries. We forget our umbrella and it rains out of a clear sky.*

All works of art are built upon cumulative cycles of Rhythmic Coincidence. Things may seem to "just happen" naturally to the beholder of finished works of Art, but they are always planned with care and artifice by the artist in the creating. Nature is not always beautiful; existence is dull more often than it is brilliant; life is frequently warped *unnaturally*. But Art always must have an *intrinsic beauty* of design, of form, of both organization and organism. The theme *may be* ugly, the character repulsive, the scenes sordid and the "lesson" shocking—but the whole must be stimulating toward better things through its very antithesis.

Art is man's most noteworthy concrete expression of Beauty. And Beauty is a finished



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composite of Coincidence. The simpler the Beauty, the more frequent the Coincidence. Art then, in its simplest terms, is a composition of Coincidences so arranged as to produce a beautiful effect.

*(EXAMPLE 90.) Perhaps the most beautiful piece of architecture in the world is the Parthenon. Its appeal lies chiefly in its simplicity of composition. And wherein does the secret of its beauty lie? Certainly it is not accidental. First of all, there are definite standards of classical Beauty. Secondly, there is a definite Technique, or law of procedure, and a precise measure for materials. So we see in the Parthenon four majestic rows of columns supporting two splendid pediments. Throughout there is a Rhythmic repetition of material devices, which by themselves may attract no notice, but when arranged at proper intervals and contributing to the whole effect without ever intruding an effect of their own—then we behold a marvelously beautiful composition. Thus the Beauty of the columnal effect lies in their Coincidental appearance, one after the other. So too in the Coincidence of pediment and pediment, fluting with fluting, angle with angle, line with line, lies the secret of the desired effect. And in the Beauty of the human being we set a standard in which balance and symmetry of its various parts occur coincidentally in the same person. In painting, Artistic Beauty lies in those works containing the greatest measure of coincidental balance.*

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The chief difference between fiction and fact lies in fiction's constant marked conflict of coincidences. When life develops a series of coincidences we say it is like a story or a play! Fiction without constant Coincidence scarcely has a leg to stand on, it is aimless and little or nothing "happens." Every time a coincidence appears in a story or a play, something really and technically happens.

*(EXAMPLE 91.) Take the story of "Madam X" and sheer it of Coincidence. It would then be a tale of hard facts of a man driving his wife from his home because of a misunderstanding. She takes to drugs, murders a man, is apprehended, and dies in court. That story is common if not commonplace. Now, bring in your Coincidence and make the judge who must sentence the woman her husband, and the young lawyer defending her her son, and you have one of the most dramatic situations possible.*

For fiction and dramatic purposes we select and employ only such material from the lives of our characters as will point and enhance the composition in hand. Our story or play may teem with "psychological moments," and it is to meet their needs that we usher in our coincidences. And if you think that any reader or audience will be content without a Coincidence, you will be disappointed.

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(EXAMPLE 92.) *The very facts of our Play structure are almost universally coincidences. The fact that there "just happens" to be one man and one woman exactly suited to each other and happily meeting within the boundaries of our Play; that the circumstances are so interlaced that make for the ultimate good of the hero; that our characters are so balanced that they are the counterpart of light and shade to our composition; that our Crises come when they do; that the Reels terminate when they do; that the Climax arrives at exactly the right moment;—all are coincidental with our Play needs and are sources of unending delight to the audience.*

Disaster from the use of Coincidence lies in its employment as a last resort "to save the day"—like those other crutches, the "will of God," Providence, Fate, etc., of the sterile writer. All coincidences must be made to seem *perfectly natural*, if not always logical. This is accomplished through the simple device of "planting" coincidences by the introduction of advance incidents earlier in the story which prepare the way for the more remarkable incident, or coincidence, that follows.

(EXAMPLE 93.) *Returning to our story of "Peter the Great": First we see Peter putting away his little hoard which means everything. It must be stolen. We give the villain a "reason" by having him lose his money through gambling. First we see the sister pleading with the villainous lover,*

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*and so are not dumbfounded when the little sister flies into his arms when harm threatens him. We have seen but not quite understood the sister's shy, anxious glances and clinging to the villain, which are later perfectly explained when it is revealed that she is about to become a mother. The villain becomes a crook, so we are not surprised that when in need of a fence he should come for the sister, his wife.*

Thus we find that coincidences, to become effective, must coalesce, melt, and blend into the fiber of the story. They may cause surprise, but must never astonish. There is no limit to what one may do or say, provided it has been previously planted. Thus the most thrilling events may come to pass as the most natural happenings in the world—that is, to those people under those circumstances. In other words, Coincidence does not have to be natural, as far as common experience goes, but it must coincide with the *prescribed life* of the play in hand.

The principle of incident and Coincidence is too, the prime source of the Situation, which in turn is the forerunner of the Crisis. Let us understand that by Situation we mean the most potent recurrent factor in Photodrama structure. For in the inceptive moment of a scene bristling with Dramatic promise of Conflict, we have the Situation.

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When the Situation has progressed into actual Conflict that demands a turning point, we have the Crisis. The Crisis might well be called a Little Climax, having special reference to the Sequence of action which it brings to its highest pitch.

*(EXAMPLE 94.)* In "Peter the Great" we introduce to Peter a persistent friend who will see to it that he goes abroad to study. When ambition to go is low, we introduce the friend. The friend's appearance at the psychological moment makes a Situation; Peter's decision to go or not to go, is the Crisis. Peter says of his sister, "She is the best part of my life—when I go to Paris, she must come too." Later, ready to go, he seeks his sister. We recall what he said. The villain has taken her away. Again, they tell Peter his little sister's life hangs on a thread—the thread of the villain's love. Coincident with this fact it becomes natural for Peter to give up his precious Paris fund to keep the villain out of jail, because his sister pleads it.

The issue of the Crises is ever progressive and cumulative, but never final; that ultimate decision of the integral conflict is left to the Grand Crisis, or Climax. Recurrent Suspense begins with the inception of the Situation, and rises higher and higher with the prolongation of the Crisis, and recedes as the issue becomes apparent. There are a multiplicity and a cumulativeness in the case of the Crisis;

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a singleness and a supremacy in that of the Climax.

Whenever the Theme or the motive of the chief Character runs afoul the Counterplot, or the motive of one of the subsidiary characters, then we have a Situation which progresses into a Crisis, works itself out and this process is repeated in cycles throughout the play until the contributory Crises lead to a solution of the main issue in the Climax. Whenever any Obstacle impeding the Hero's purpose is encountered, a Situation rises and a Crisis follows. And any clash of interests is an Obstacle.

We create Crises by dashing hope to the ground and supplanting it with doubt that gradually grows to hope—but when the Crisis is over a new situation rises and hope fades to doubt again, and so on to the end of the baffling, well-constructed play.

There may be both Dynamic and Dramatic crises. But there is always the old danger of the Dynamic, with its rush and roar, offsetting purely Dramatic Crises with their tense silences. The emotional is always more powerful and sustaining than the mechanical. Frequently tremendous Dynamic Crises have been built up that quite stultified the emotional Climax and real issue of the Play.

## COINCIDENCE, CRISIS, CLIMAX

(EXAMPLE 95.) In "The Birth of a Nation" the repeated rush and roar of the Ku Klux Klan flattened out all the emotional and finer Crises within earshot and came dangerously near to making the more refined Climax of the play a fizzle. We are too unstrung to feel the fineness of a dying mother crooning to her babe after being boomed through a bloody battle. Thrills shock the soul out of tune, just as strident sensations make the sensitive soul shrink into emotional insignificance.

As in Crises, so in the Climax, it should be Dramatic always, rather than Dynamic. The Dynamic calls into play the sensations rather than the emotions, which are the true media of Dramatic appreciation.

(EXAMPLE 96.) In "The Barrier" is to be found one of the most perfect Climaxes that has appeared in Photodrama. After a series of personal combats that oftentimes threaten to frighten out our emotions with thrills, we come to the Big Moment, the emotional grandeur of which brings us sublimely back to our Dramatic selves. 'Poleon, the French Canadian, who has lost the girl whom he thought he had won, to the Hero, gets into his canoe and sails back to the wilds forever, singing as he goes though tears stream down his face and his heart is breaking, so that she on shore in the arms of the Hero will think he is going away happily.

The term "punch" has been used much in connection with the Photoplay. Putting in

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the punch is equivalent to building up a Climax that will strike the audience a tremendous emotional blow. When we feel a deep emotion after seeing a play, we may be sure that it contains a punch. The punch is simply the effective expression of the movement that underlies the action. The punch is the force behind the Climax.

The Climax demands that we bring our opposing forces—or what is left of them—out into the open, maybe for the first time; and in a Dramatic Armageddon they fight to a finish and settle forever the question of supremacy for which the Play stands a symbol.

There can be but one Climax to a given Play and it is toward this Grand Crisis that every energy and motor in the Play moves unswervingly. If there be another Crisis of equal moment at the end of the Play it is Anti-Climax, and the whole principle of Dramatic Art has been violated in the faulty construction.



III  
PRACTISE



*Art does not reveal its Fullness at a Glance. It Lures One on and on through Impressionistic Paths with many Pleasant Turnings, Affording Suggestive Glimpses and Veiled Vistas that do not Pause until the Climax has been Ascended, and then the Way lies Outspread before our Vision like an Enchanted Domain with All Roads Leading to the Castle Splendid.*

## CHAPTER XV

### THE VALUE OF AN OUTLINE

VISUALIZATION; ART AND PSYCHOLOGY; COINCIDENCE AGAIN; MECHANICAL PLUS ARTISTIC; IMPRESSIONISM; ELEMENTS OF INTEREST; CONTRAST AND MOTIVATION; BEGINNING, MIDDLE, AND END; HARMONY; REPETITIVE EFFECTS.

**T**HE time has come to put our acquired knowledge of principles into practise. First, however, we must acquaint ourselves with the philosophy of practise and just how material is altered without changing its nature.

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We return emphatically to one of the truths touched upon earlier in the discussion, that it is not the material nor the methods themselves that are most important, but *the Idea or the vision of the author, which they seek to suggest and visualize*. After all, the Play and the players are but symbols. Through coarser expression we endeavor to reveal the Artist's finer impressions. If we can manage to make the audience see it through his eyes, then we have ensnared the vision splendid. Practise, then, is active *impressionism*.

*Visualization* now becomes our keynote. Dramatic Visualization means *feeling while we see*. Visualization means, then, not merely seeing physical action with the physical eye, but through the gift of *sympathetic vision* enriching the world with all the treasures of brilliant human experience. Visualization is the power to make deeds of action, comrades of characters, experience of a Play and Life of Drama.

All manner of expression is valueless or lost except it have climacteric significance. It must be an effective medium of story communication. It must have both mental—or conventional—significance, and emotional—or personal—significance.

## VALUE OF THE OUTLINE

*(EXAMPLE 97.) The term "Dearest" is insignificant and meaningless to one foreign to the word. But granted its emotional appreciation, it breaks the bonds of Convention and creates a bond between Lovers.*

We now arrive at the conclusion that all Art Appeal is based on: I. Inspired Impression; II. Dramatic Expression; III. Emotional Appreciation.

Art Appeal is largely a matter of psychology. *How* are we going to carry our story message most effectively, re-inspire our audience most poignantly, appeal to their emotions most dramatically, convince their minds most logically—and preserve our artistic poise unblemished? Surely whatever means are available to our Dramatic end are legitimate, if they meet Art standards.

Our constant friend in time of need—which is really from beginning to end—is Coincidence. Coincidence, we repeat, is the basic principle of all Art Appeal.

*(EXAMPLE 98.) The full-blown process of the operation of Coincidence might be summed up as follows: 1. The audience's attention must be attracted; 2. Follows a sense of recognition as though it had known this phenomenon before; 3. Then comes certain identification, Why, of course—etc.; 4. Now we have its interest clinched; 5. Comes a groping question of association; 6. Presto! Found*

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

*amidst gratification, and Coincidence is established; 7. Immediately a sense of gracious balance succeeds; 8. A luxurious knowledge of Beauty follows; 9. Gratification suffuses the audience; 10. A natural comprehension of Art caps the whole automatically. The entire process may be so rapid as to seem to be instantaneous. This is because the mind is quicker than lightning. If the appeal is successful it is always the same. It behooves us, therefore, to employ media with ten-point power.*

To visualize, we seek symbols. And what are symbols, but phenomena in the minds and hearts of our audience that coincide in expression with our impression? The real thing must be imagined by the suggestion of its symbol. And the experiment is not successful until the imagined thing *becomes real!*

Now, then, we set out to build—*on the audience's imagination*. Our problem becomes one of fitting the Artistic with the mechanical requirements. It is a simple enough thing to attract an audience's attention. Any fool may do that by springing up and shouting "Fire!" He would destroy order and create chaos. On the contrary, we must attract attention and hold the audience at attention until we have driven home our tenth point—Art! We have an Order to follow, an Order to preserve, and an Order to complete.

## VALUE OF THE OUTLINE

Order must be preconceived, else how can we *follow* it? Whether our Photoplay be divided into three, five, or seven Parts, the method of building will be identical.

(EXAMPLE 99.) *All Photoplays have three component divisions: I. A Beginning; II. A Middle; III. An End. Corresponding to these are: I. Introduction; II. Struggle; III. Solution. In relation to Hero-motivation the corresponding divisions are: I. Desire; II. Conflict; III. Conquest or Attainment.*

The first Part—or Reel, or Act, or whatever constructive unit we may employ—inevitably has to do with division I.—the Beginning of the Play, the Introduction of the characters or the establishment of the Desire of the Hero and the counter-desires of supporting characters. The last Part, no matter whether there be three, five, or seven Parts, or Reels, has inevitably to do with division III.—the End of the Play, the solution of the problem, the conquest by the hero and the attainment of his purpose. All intervening Parts, whether there be one or seven, are inevitably concerned with division II.—the Middle of the Play, the inter-struggle of characters, the Conflict of the Hero in quest of his conceived desire.

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

To recapitulate, all Photoplays have *only three* component divisions, although they may have from three to twelve external Parts.

(EXAMPLE 100.) *We may illustrate this point by referring to Chapter XX, An Accepted Synopsis. Here we shall find completed, the Idea with which we have worked at times under the title of "Peter The Great," which we have changed for reasons explained in the text. We find in Part I.—A Dream of Youth, the Beginning, the Introduction and the implanting of the desire of the Hero to win fame in a musical career. In Parts II, III, IV, V and VI, we find the Middle of the Play, Struggle and Conflict that brings us forward to ever tenser Crises. Then in Part VII, we find the tragic End, Solution and Conquest with a promise of Attainment.*

The end of each Part—except the final Part—actually sees the desire of the Hero seemingly almost gratified, and the Play thus ended, when something untoward happens!

What we are pleased to call an Outline, is an arrangement of the Parts of the Play with a title or heading appended to each. First let us give warrant to the employment of titles to the Parts, and then we shall proceed to the simplified process of *building by Parts*.

We revert to the principle to be found in Example 98, and repeat that whatever means are available to our Dramatic End are legitimate. On the stage we have a curtain that



## VALUE OF THE OUTLINE

punctuates, effectually divides, and fittingly completes each unit of the Play. Here is a conventional formality that fits the need exactly. And so in the case of the book, we have enumerated Chapters, titles to Chapters, illustrations, tailpieces, etc., giving us a foretaste of what is to come, a promise of rewards, cultivating the right mood, and adding atmosphere that will tend to take the reader imaginatively, delightfully, and realistically out of his arm chair and into the heart of the adventure.

Now if ever an Art mode of expression needed its units clearly defined and effectually divided, it is the Photoplay. It is like a great tome of multitudinous small scenes rapidly flashed for the space of a mile or more. A slight slip and the story is gone; an injudicious cut and we are bewildered. In the Photoplay there is no time for explanations, no place for marginal notes. Once begun, there is no respite, no pause for breath, but a hurried, jostling gallop to the end of the Play.

All of which is excusable in Comedy, but it is highly criticisable in any Art product that would lay claim to poise, balance, grace, and potential deliberateness.

Imagine a book or a play without a title! The title should be richly fraught with the

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fragrance of the Play that suggests to the audience the color and sweetness, the beauty and depth, of the garden whose gateway stands ajar. A good title should epitomize the thought of the Play without disclosing its dénouement. In a book, the title is ever before our eyes at the top of the page. In a Stage Play it recurs to us on the program which we consult at the close of the cycle of action, the Act. Thus the book in its Chapter unit, and the Stage Play in its Scene and Act, have their pleasing Rhythm that piles Crisis on Crisis with the relentless picturesqueness of the waves of the sea which no man can withstand. The Photoplay must have something to take their place. Hence the Outline, which is a sub-title for each Part. These sub-titles must breathe the same spirit as the main title and tempt the imagination without appeasing it at the beginning of each cycle of action, or Part, like a Chapter heading. These sub-titles must be in themselves cumulative, filled with progressing tenseness as they approach the Climax. If a metaphor is attempted in the main title, the sub-titles should carry out the metaphor to the point of fruition. In other words, there must be an intrinsic agreement between title and sub-titles, just as there should be close harmony

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between these and the essence of the story. Thus it may be inferred that an Outline is subject to Technical excellence and Artistic conception.

(EXAMPLE 101.) In "*The Agitator*":

*Part I.—Disciples of Discontent*

*Part II.—A Leader Arises*

*Part III.—The Voice of the People*

*Part IV.—The Might of a Woman*

*Part V.—The Pinnacle of Power*

As the main title must contain the essence of the entire Play, so must each of the subtitles of the Outline contain the essence of its Part.

A Photoplay of five reels means nothing to the audience if there is no division between them. It has not even time significance. It is merely the measure of a mile of film. Art products are not built in the mass and exhibited in the bulk thus. Attentiveness, interest, entertaining endurance, travel in cycles. When a cycle begins to become exhausted it is revived by artificial respiratives and stimulants. The mind palls over the monotony of the withoutstop mass, but it delights in repetitive effects. Hence the paragraph and Chapter, the Act and Scene, the verse and Canto and the outline with its Parts.

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

The sub-title should precede on the screen immediately the action of the Part it concerns, exactly as the Chapter title precedes its Chapter. It acts as a "curtain" to the Part that has just been finished. Rather than interrupt anything, it forms a binder of the action and establishes everything as well as giving a delicious foreshadow that enhances the interest and heightens the entertainment.

*(EXAMPLE 102.)* Objections to the sub-title will continue to be voiced logically by the type of producer who feels it his bounden duty to give screen "credit" to sub-directors, director, co-directors, director general, camera men, lighting-effects artist, artist responsible for arranging sets, scenario by—, synopsis by—, from story by—, etc. Surely some of these no doubt worthy ladies and gentlemen should be satisfied with their munificent salaries without interrupting the story to make a bow that no one except their own immediate friends and relatives give a hang about—not to mention the one or more stars who each claim a "frame" or more for a few personal remarks. A hundred feet or more to exploit studio aids at the expense of the story seems costly. Sub-titles would occupy less place. Which is no plea to dispense with the names of real author, director, and star.

*Tools without Handles sooner or later lead to a Confusion that will Injure the Workman and Botch his Work.*

## CHAPTER XVI

### DEFINITIONS OF WORKING TERMS

TITLE; MOTIVE; CAST; OUTLINE; SYNOPSIS;  
CONTINUITY; SCENARIO; MANUSCRIPT;  
PHOTOPLAY; PHOTODRAMA; PLOT, COMPLETE  
PLOT, PLOT FRAGMENT, PLOT GERM.

LET us now make it clear briefly what the building groups and their functions are. First in order is the *title*. The title is the *name* of the Photoplay; therefore it seems fitting that it should at least suggest some of the personality of the thing itself. It may tell something of what it is about, but should never reveal how it is brought about, which is the function of the story and not the title. It is advisable, though not essential, that the title be conceived before the story is begun. We may have been unable at the first to approximate the right title, which comes to us later in a happy flash. Spend hours—days

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if necessary—on your title and then live up to every letter in it!

The next step in the building group—which may seem arbitrary, though its induction seems warranted from every point of view—is the *Motif*. The Motif is stated in just a line or two giving key and pitch to all, an ever present guide to Harmony and a stern index to Purpose. Its use begins with the author, but thereafter it becomes an aid to all concerned—continuity-writer, director, and actor—to hew to the line, stick to the spirit, and never to step out of his part. Like all motifs it occurs ever and anon.

*(EXAMPLE 103.) So in the case of the Complete Synopsis of "Pierre Le Grand," to be found in another chapter, the motif is: There are Great Hearts—like Fixed Stars—which, though storms may rage that cloud the Horizon and seem to threaten their very Existence, they shine and smile ever on, guiding Weaker Mortals in their Upward Climb.*

Thus it may be seen that the motif is a paraphrase of the story. More frequently than otherwise, to have it appear, following the title on the screen, enhances the Appeal of the Photoplay.

Our next element in the building group to appear on the manuscript is the *cast* of char-

## DEFINITIONS: WORKING TERMS

acters. That this element has been consistently slighted may be inferred on studying the following chapter.

The next building element to appear on the manuscript is the *Outline*. The Outline appears here separate and complete. It appears in the manuscript and on the screen also as sub-titles for their respective Parts. The complete Outline is the basis for the building program which we shall presently essay.

A *Part*—sometimes designated as a Reel—is one of the divisions included in the Outline. A Part may be exactly a reel of film, though this is arbitrary. It may take half a reel or two reels—it is a unit of Dramatic measure, not of time or film. Each Part has its own construction and climax, which is cumulatively related to the Grand Climax.

Next comes the *Synopsis*, or the story of the play, built in accordance with the Outline.

The *continuity* of the Photoplay differs from the synopsis in that it *is* the play that the synopsis tells us about. The continuity is the working plan used by the building director. It should contain nothing that has not been suggested in the synopsis. It is *the physical history*, whereas the synopsis is *the emotional story*. The synopsis tells what and why it is, while the continuity shows how it is

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going to be built. The synopsis is altogether a matter of Art with a knowledge of Mechanics in the background; the continuity is altogether a matter of Mechanics with a conception of Art in the background.

The *scenario* is any draft of the scene-order of the story. Continuity might well be called a working-scenario.

The *manuscript*—or script, into which the word has been permanently slanged by the studio—is the author's original hand-writing or handiwork in toto. It is also made to mean the paper containing all or any part of the play.

A *Photoplay* is the completed story as played by the players and produced on the screen. A Photoplay in manuscript is the title, Motif, cast, Outline and Synopsis en bloc.

*Photodrama* is the art of reproducing great moments of Life in story by means of animated photographs before an audience who shall recognize their truth and find entertainment therein. The term may be made to include as well the Mechanics of making and producing Photoplays.

A *Plot* is a practicable idea upon which a Photoplay story may be based, built and beautified. A *Complete Plot* is one in which an



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idea has been developed from Purpose to Attainment, every Technical problem having been generated, met, and solved, ready to begin the synopsis. A *Plot fragment* is a Dramatic Situation capable of important development or of becoming the crux of the story. A *Plot germ* may be any Dramatic stimulant sufficient to impel the plotting faculties into fruitful activity.

*Characters neither Simulate nor Imitate other Persons—they Become and ARE the Persons Themselves.*

## CHAPTER XVII

### CASTING CHARACTERS

CHARACTERS VS. ACTORS; NOT PANTOMIME; EXPRESSION, NOT ACTING; HUSKS OR SPIRIT; SYMBOLS AGAIN; INTERPRETERS ONLY; SPIRITUAL MEETINGS; STAR SYSTEM; REVEALING MOTIF; "CHARACTER" ROLES; EXPRESSION EMPHATIC BUT NOT EXAGGERATED; DIFFERENTIATION; LEADS AND GOOD AND BAD CHARACTERS; INTERPLAY; NATURALNESS.

**T**HIS actor-vs.-character business has been always more serious and damaging to all Drama than the merely commercial producer and the over-ambitious actor have considered it to be. Often we ask ourselves—as we see the same actors taking the same kind of parts all their days—is not histrionic versatility one of the rarest of the Arts? Whether this seeming sterility is due to managerial coercion, professional laziness, or artistic limitations, the fact remains that the large majority of actors get in their "part" rut early in their

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professional life and stick there until age relegates them to the "elderly character" rut. It is true, however, that all actors—whether they be of the actor constellation or artist stars—can play one type better than any other.

But the author has co-operated none too well with producer, director, and actor in setting forth the intrinsic qualities of his characters other than as we find them inextricably enmeshed in the complications of the action of the play. Photoplay manuscripts are read and accepted pre-eminently in the terms of their application to high-salaried stars who must be kept working. Seldom indeed is the Play the thing, or fine Photodrama the goal per se. Producers and their staffs are always tempted by the "fireworks" in a script, yet before they buy they always ask each other, "But can MacCullough Booth do it?" And, after the script is bought, if they find their star cannot do it, they alter the Play to fit his measure of talent.

In nine cases out of ten, to alter a character means to tamper mischievously with the whole Play, since the chief character is intrusted with the attainment of the underlying motive and the interpreting Purpose for which the play was created. In the case of

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

the worth-while Play a sad blunder is the result. It is something of a tragedy when a splendid Idea is misplayed or a good actor is miscast. Finely constructed and balanced Plays are inflexible, while an artist's talent should be broad and adaptable. Both the trouble and the difficulty lie in the haste in which plays are bought, rehashed, glanced over, and produced.

Now, if the author can and will co-operate and so amplify his cast of characters that it will reveal the nature of the characters to be portrayed, and not merely enumerate an empty list of names, the advantages, the convenience, the clarification and the time-saving will be incalculable. It scarcely will be necessary to read stories—or only a small proportion of them at most. A perusal of the cast will show almost at a glance whether or not it is suitable for the retained star and his or her stock supports. If it is, then read the story by all means.

(EXAMPLE 104.) *“Peter the Great”—which eventually becomes “Pierre Le Grand”—was accepted in this very manner. The Lead was delineated thus: PIERRE FONTANELLE.....A Grand Figure among the simple French people of Old Quebec; he is a potential musician and composer of rare ability, with a cherished Dream of Musical Fame*

## CASTING CHARACTERS

*in the Secret Garden of his heart; but he is a Dreamer rather than a Doer, and has none of the harsher traits of commercial Ambition; yet he is the sublimer Doer when it comes to Sacrifice for others—especially for his little sister, Gabriele; he is emotional and always ready to re-dream his Dream, but needs a force to push him on to action; he is gentleness personified, and part of his Creed is an abhorrence for Violence and Combat, which makes his enemy think him a Coward; withal he is intensely human and when baited beyond endurance will turn upon his tormentor with a ferocity such as only the long-suffering are capable of.—It was seen at a glance that William Farnum fitted the part like a glove.*

Merely to enumerate a conventional list of names indicating that they appear in the Play means absolutely nothing to the inquirer seeking to know Who and What the people are who appear and *interpret* the Play-Idea. Mere names mean nothing to reader, director, or actor. A name is only the husk and what they are all seeking is the spirit. From that list, how do they know what qualifications are essential to fill the parts? Give them the details of Who the person really is under his skin, What he or she will do when put to it. They want to meet these people soul to soul; they must assume their very beings! Can they do it?

No, this delineating a character is not mere-

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ly assuming a play-name and strutting before the camera. An actor is only an actor when off the boards and the screen. The physical John Smith the actor has ceased to exist on the screen; it is Hamlet we see there! If we see John Smith the actor, on the screen, then he is miscast. Externals are a matter of actor; internals of character. The gulf of Art lies between them.

How, we ask, is an actor intelligently and sincerely to *become* a character through and through whose bowing acquaintance he makes through the director's direction to "Throw yourself on that sofa and weep as though you had just heard the news of your mother's death." Oh dear, oh dear! Great artists have been asked to go through this twaddle. If they fail to "get" him the director will go through the performance of "working up steam" for actors who falter. *Then they imitate him!* This sort of thing has been done every day for years in the studios. More often than not, the actor was kept in ignorance of the true nature of the character because his interpretation might clash with that of the director. Actors primarily are interested in the Emotional depth of the Play. Directors primarily are interested in the physical breadth of the Play.

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Characters whom we meet by name only, are just like people we meet by name only. We don't know a blessed thing about them except their names. Now the character becomes an actor's second self; he must know the part no less than he knows himself. He must have a perfect *Emotional understanding* of this Play, know what he will do under any given condition; he must creep into his soul. Then whatever he does will be truly *natural*.

Are any of us able to tell the thoughts, motives, yearnings, of a soul we have never known? Could we hope even to imitate them? Dramatic qualities lie in the soul of the character, of the actor, of everyone. There must be a get-together, or spiritual meeting, of all concerned. They must get the characters into their souls and emotions. They must *feel* the emotions of the characters.

The author then must not merely describe characters, but *delineate* them. The author alone can tell the truth about them, for they are mind of his mind and spirit of his spirit. It is requisite in the brief hour of the Drama that we know the characters as we do persons we have been acquainted with for years and under the stress of the Big Moments of Life.

The true cast then should be a catalog of *potentialities*. The author should visualize

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the character's souls. He reveals what they are and *can* do. The actor becomes what they are, with all their potentialities of strength and weakness, and he *will* do what they would have done under the circumstances. The actor takes upon himself their destiny which the author has predetermined in the Climax of his Play. For the author has created their own little temporary world. For the moment, actors and audience are concerned only with the prescribed life of our characters, which is a real thing apart from the actual life that has been shoved aside. The end of this little inside world comes with the Climax. Incidents and people who do not motivate that Climax are no concern of ours. Unrelated incidents and people are as remote as the Martians and only serve to tear us out of our superinduced abstraction of the Play.

Minor characters that should appear in the cast are those who are brought into intimate and personal contact with the leading character, or characters, and on whose dramatic "support" he depends for interference or assistance in the pursuit of his Purpose. Thus in our cast we shall include the leading character, or characters, and the supporting characters. Other people who may appear on the



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screen, like all the other people we all of us pass by in the daily walks of life, are the "properties" and make the settings natural.

(EXAMPLE 105.) *The people on a crowded thoroughfare; the policeman, the postman, and the porter; the waiter in the restaurant, the conductor on the train—they are worlds outside our own intimate circle or group, that is, they are no emotional concern of ours—unless they pierce this circle and enter our emotional life.*

Delineating the psychological attributes of the character, then, is more than essential. On the other hand, describing physical endowments requisite to the character is of doubtful advantage. If the heroine is described as flaxen-haired, a raving beauty, tall and slender, blue-eyed and tilted-nosed, and the star is a brunette, neither tall nor slender, black-eyed and aquiline-nosed, it is doubtful that the producer would repudiate her contract to take the Play for another. Actors may look like various things, but characters simply *are* things and *do* things regardless of their looks. It is advisable to have characters look the part, of course, but what counts is how they do it!

There we strike the keynote—characters describe themselves alone *in terms of expres-*

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*sion.* We differentiate cast from synopsis then, in that the cast reveals only the potentialities of the characters, while the synopsis takes for granted this disclosure of potentialities and concerns itself only with their expression. When we seek what it is that characters express, we find that they express their characteristics, which in turn are largely symbols of the vices and virtues of humanity. So, bearing in mind that Contrast is the basic motive principle in Dramatic construction, we must see to it that our cast is well blessed with variety. From one point of view, Photodrama is nothing less than the interplay between characters endowed with contrasting characteristics and opposing motives. One glance at a well-balanced Dramatic cast reveals that the characters there delineated, when thrown together within the narrow confines of the Photoplay, with but one fighting way out, are bound to bring about a circus before they are through.

(EXAMPLE 106.) *The ingredients that go to make up "No—She Would Not Wed" are: Cicely Sumner.....An incorrigible, wild young girl; characteristic, that of being untamed.....Jim Fleming.....A serious minded, strong handed young man; loves a fight; characteristic, that of indomitability.....Mr. Torrence.....Old fuss of a bachelor who*

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*hates wildness; characteristic, that of being orderly and conventional.....Mr. Jollibee.....Unconventional, loves everybody; characteristic, that of optimistic gentleness.....Aunt Teresa.....Sentimental hypocrite; characteristic, that of insincerity.....Cousin Eustace.....Dashing devil among the women; characteristic, that of polite villainy. Now put them all in the same hat and shuffle up their characteristics!*

It may readily be seen that one of the simplest and most important steps in the process of Dramatic construction lies in this creation and arrangement of casts. We return to our diagram, with the Hero and his inseparable Purpose represented by the broad central line running from the base of the action to its apex. Stop and think, then, what characters will best suit your Dramatic Purpose of making the sparks fly. As you think of them, draw a line representing them, for or against the hero. Try to introduce a comedy character if you can without resorting to the inartistic expedient of dragging in a cute and helpless baby or kitten from the outside world to help out. Comedy is not essential, though highly advisable.

Aside from any other point, characters must be differentiated in order to make them vitally interesting. The very moment they *appear* together they become Dramatic.

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Spiritual Conflict is spontaneous even before there is either expression or action on their part. This is a social axiom; and because it is true of human society, it is true of Drama, which is a mirror of life's worthwhile characters.

*Building is giving Concrete Form to Expression—Rheims Cathedral is a Living Stone Image of a Sublime Vicissitude of the Soul of an Unknown Thirteenth Century Artist.*

## CHAPTER XVIII

### BUILDING BY PARTS

BEGINNING WITH THE CLIMAX; PLOTTING METHODS; QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED; PART BUILDING; DIAGRAM AND COUNTER-PLOTTING; CLIMAXES; MOTIVATION.

**A** PHOTOPLAY, like our human self, may be said to be composed of spirit—which is the Idea-Motif; frame—which is the Plot; and body—which is the finished Play.

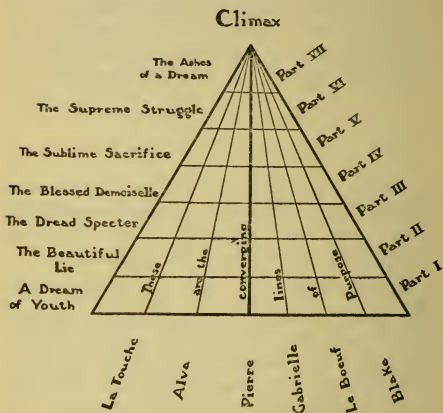
Granted we have the Idea-Motif, our next step is to build a fitting frame to house it. A curious fact about effective Plot building is, that we build the end of the plot *first*.

It is absolutely essential to know whither we are going and to what purpose, at the outset, since every happening, situation and crisis contribute directly or indirectly to the Climax.\* Thus our diagram is a perfect line drawing of a Play in plot form.

\* Again we refer students and readers to "The Plot of the Short Story" and "The Universal Plot Catalog," by the author of this volume.

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(EXAMPLE 107.)



Above we have a perfect drawing of our Photoplay, "Pierre Le Grand." Note the ever converging lines drawing the action tighter and tighter as the Play advances. Each horizontal line within the triangle represents the end of a Part. Each Part sees the hedging in on the Hero and his line of purpose. Arrayed on either side and constantly bearing against his Purpose lines are the purpose lines of each of the other principal characters. On one side of him are those trying to give him aid, on the other side are those hindering him in attaining his pur-

## BUILDING BY PARTS

*pose. Throughout, each character clings to his own purpose to the very end. Our Hero is crowded ever closer, each contest to hold their respective positions becoming more and more intense, until at the Climax they all come together in a decisive struggle in which one must win. The Climax is not quite at the end, or apex, that space is left for rewards and punishments and for each to attain the end that his action throughout the play warrants. Each Part has its own semi-Climax, which is marked by the horizontal lines within the triangle. Each Part is a complete segment of action, the characters having been carried forward in pursuit of their purposes just as far and at practically the same angle as the diagram shows. The more converging character lines there are, the more possibility of excitement and suspense, but the more skill needed to control the many characters. We may compare the action to an advance in battle formation, none may lag, all must be up and active, the line must neither waver nor be broken.*

This does not mean that we put on the steeple before we build the foundation. However, our first step is to determine beyond peradventure what the Hero's Purpose is and how he shall attain it or fail to do so. That is the story. We must know the outcome in advance. Our process so far is one of careful conjecture.

But we do not build backward. Keeping our Climax ever fixed in our mental horizon, we now return to the beginning of our Plot.

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Provided our idea is a big Idea, sufficient for five or more film reels of Dramatic endurance, it is possible for us at this point to determine how many Parts its exploitation will *nicely* admit of. Each product will admit of a *single perfect* exploitation or development. Some will attain this fine maturity in five Parts, others may warrant more or less. Five Parts is suggested as a standard length and form.

Since each Part has a climax all its own, it adheres to the same rule of the complete story, in that we must find out the end of the Part before we may intelligently essay a beginning. Assuming that five Parts will answer, we may proceed to four great crises with which to terminate four of the Parts, reserving Part V for the Climax of the story itself. Our idea is to seek four cycles of action terminating in a sharp Crisis, one following the other, cumulatively, each more intense and critical and each aggravating the Climax more persistently.

*(EXAMPLE 108.) Having concluded what the Climax of the story shall be, an excellent method of procedure is to set down "Part I ends with....." And so on, Part II, III, IV, with the words "ends with" jotted beside it and leaving blank space to set down with what it ends when you have discovered your crises.*



## BUILDING BY PARTS

Having determined how many Parts we intend to employ and having our title and Climax in hand, a simple method is to *name* the Parts—subtitle them—keeping the spirit and the essence of the main title in so doing. This may be done tentatively, because of the great time and care needed for the perfect Outline, bearing in mind the great crisis that is to culminate each Part.

(EXAMPLE 109.) In "*A Temporary Nut*," the outline reflects the spirit of high comedy: Part I—*A Broken Joint*; Part II—*A Loose Nut*; Part III—*A Cracked Union*; Part IV—*A Busted "Pipe"*; Part V—*A Damaged Drain*. In "*The Three Wishes*," a modern Romance is properly keyed: Part I—*The Enchantment*; Part II—*The Deep Forest of Life*; Part III—*The Kingdom of a Wish*; Part IV—*The Vanity of Wishes*; Part V—*The Spell is Lifted*.

These Parts are *Chapters* in the play-life and purpose of the chief character, or episodes in developing the Theme. Each chapter ends with the almost solution that seems to grow more and more hopeless.

Having discovered what every Part "ends with," we are prepared to seek what each Part begins with. This means that we are ready to begin to write the synopsis.

*Photodrama is the Phantom among the Arts—but a few vagrant Words from the Author's Script Sift through to the Screen; the Actor Mimics Silently with no Audience in sight; an Audience beholds a Silent Drama with only the Speechless Wraiths of Actors flickering in half-darkness against a Distant Wall!*

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE READABLE SYNOPSIS

MENTAL BUILDING; VISUALIZATION AGAIN; IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER; SILENT DRAMA; LENGTH OF SYNOPSIS; SUGGESTION; MOTIVATION; IMMEDIACY; PARAGRAPHIC SEQUENCES; HARMONY; VISION; DESIRE AND STRUGGLE; STYLE AND TEMPO; LITERARY GARNISHINGS; READABILITY; PLAY OF AN HOUR; ALL THERE IS TO TELL; CONCRETE ACTION.

**W**E build our synopsis mentally first. In other words, we work out all our difficulties and solve our Technical problems before we attempt to set down the answers. Drama in its forward movement is analogous

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to geometrical progression. The introduction of a line or angle, an Event or Crisis, will alter each successive process and inevitably change the grand result, or Climax. Having worked out all the intricacies of Plot, we are now prepared to write our synopsis.

The requisites of the Photoplay synopsis have led to the creation of a new literary style. A study of photoplay effects will disclose that they are fraught with a pressing urge of *immediacy*, a certain demand for now-ness in every particular, a hurry-call for instantaneous understandings from all sides. This is due to the multiplicity of action particles—which are technically called “scenes”—and mechanical “frames,” which must impress their messages in the fraction of a second or minute each. There must be speed without haste, and this synthetic fragmentation must be in evidence only in the building of the Photoplay. The finished product must run as smoothly as a stream of water made up of countless drops and numerous tributaries now flowing as a single powerful body toward a common goal, fast or slowly according to the gravity of the situation.

Now, any literary devices that can naturally imitate our process, simulate the matter itself, and give verisimilitude of the desired effects

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

without becoming a freak, are worthy of consideration and adoption. Thus our first happy device is that of employing *present tense*, thereby attaining the desired immediacy of appeal and effect at once. Thus whatever happens does so *now*, right before our immediate vision. Nothing could be more incisive or dramatic. Instantly we approximate the actual cinematographic process.

(EXAMPLE 110.) "The Primitive Woman" opens with: "An entertainment is in full swing at the Suburban Hotel. Guests are grouped about a stage that is set far front. Professor Stephen Alden is there with his mother and sister." It is all going on NOW.

In making things happen coincident with the disclosure, or expression of the thought, we pass the first and most difficult test of Art Appeal—that of inducing *reality*. We may call our style *synthetic*, and it must suggest the thought: "Read—then look into your heart, it is all happening there, now!" To effect this we must tell our story in terms of emotion, but in such personal terms that the reader and the audience will *feel* it. From this we may deduce that the synopsis must express our story Idea intelligibly and emotionally. To accomplish this, there must be

## THE READABLE SYNOPSIS

a medium of mutual understanding and feeling, a language and sympathy, a set of symbols and vision—and all this we call simply applied Technique. We find it exemplified in the synopsis.

Technique again must come to the rescue as the writer comes face to face with his task of expression, which is most singular in that he must write altogether in terms of suggestion, for only an occasional word of all he writes will literally ever appear in the finished product! He must speak altogether in the language of symbols. He does neither more nor less than give suggestive *directions* for the emotional expression of the idea-plot. He must write a story without words, a Drama without dialogue, a narrative without description. And yet the synopsis must be a living, vital, Dramatic story that springs into being through immediate *visualization*, that tells all there is to tell!

It has been said that the synopsis must tell its story in terms of "action." That our synopsis tell its story *in terms of expression*, is a happier phrase. For it is not essential that characters do something every second of their appearance, but it is highly important that they be and *mean* something throughout their appearance. The setting, the properties,

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

the mob, the support and the main characters must all *influence* in the direction of the desired impression—or not appear at all. *Impression* then is the thing—instantaneous, deep, powerful and lasting impression.

(EXAMPLE III.) “Old Mr. Torrence is fussing about his home as usual. He is the Czar of his own house and makes everyone suffer when he makes a mistake. So we find he has mislaid his precious old pipe. Everyone is requisitioned—the house-keeper, the maid, and the cook. They look everywhere. Mr. Torrence finally finds the pipe in the pocket of his dressing gown. He sends them all back to their places blaming them for their oversight.”—In this opening to “No—She Would Not Wed,” the keynote of the Play is touched and the future Comedy is forecast and character is established—all instantly.

Our example discloses not alone that action is not the only medium of interpretation, but also another technicality of synopsis style-effectiveness; namely, that of paragraph sequence. By this is meant that each paragraph shall include—neither more nor less—a complete cycle or sequence of action. Thus a minor motive is introduced by either a principal or supporting character and carried past its Crisis to a complete solution before we close the paragraph in which it began.

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One Sequence is finished uninterruptedly before another is begun, which in turn is undertaken and completed before another is begun. The order of the Sequence paragraphs is that of the progression of the story itself, and in the main is chronological.

(EXAMPLE 112.) MR. TORRENCE'S MOST HORRIBLE VICE AND CHIEF OCCUPATION IS SOLITAIRE. We see him engaged in a terrible game against himself with things coming out all wrong, which is evidenced by his grimaces. To make matters worse, he is interrupted by his housekeeper coming to the door; he finally admits her and with a great frown takes the packet she hands him. It is registered, so he must sign for it. He bawls out the housekeeper, the postman, and everybody else. Then he opens and becomes almost unmanageable in his irritability. He reads in part:—THE FORMER EXECUTOR SUGGESTS THAT YOU BE APPOINTED GUARDIAN IN HIS PLACE. THIS WAS HIS LAST REQUEST. Mr. Torrence tosses the letter aside in his wrath and is making a continued row which he takes out on the Housekeeper who comes to announce: MR. JOLLIBEE, TORRENCE'S SOLE FRIEND, MANAGER AND CONFIDANT.

"Mr. Jollibee, all smiles, at great length manages to soothe Mr. Torrence," etc. But a new sequence of action has begun.

We note that not only the synopsis, but also each paragraph, opens with *concrete expres-*

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*sion*, something vital goes on all the time. Everything outside its impartial view is meat for another Sequence of expression. It is part of that immediacy which must be present in every operation. Again we attain it in the succinctness of the synopsis, in its close-packed style, that delineates in swift, broad strokes with every expressive sentence which must not only say something but *tell* it as well.

In Photodrama, we must effect instantaneous understanding or none. Photoplay life is too short and rapid for recapitulations. Therefore all that appears in the synopsis must be material, not matter, and be highly suggestive. Who the character is and what he is doing must be made clear. A mistaken cue will send the reader's, the actor's, or the audience's wits far in the wrong direction, and vital connective events may transpire unnoted before their minds can return and grasp the situation again. As we have said, impressions must be driven deep and quick. Incisiveness is imperative on account of the multiplicity of Scenes—some a few seconds in length. And because there is neither waste of words nor action, the synopsis may seem to lack the leisureliness of other literary forms, though it should never want in dignity, any more than the resultant Photoplay should



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be wanting in that quality. From this we gather that the synopsis is nothing less than a new way of telling a story with all the Esthetic and Emotional properties of pre-established styles and with a *vividness* of reality that all forms may well borrow. To repeat, the synopsis is the story of the Play that might be told after seeing the Photoplay, only as a matter of fact it is written before the Play is made.

There is no room for physical description in the Photoplay. Things *are* instantly they are seen or spoken about. The author tells who and what his characters are and baldly where the events take place. It is the director's function, by means of locations and sets, to supplement this by placing the characters in logical and fitting environment and surroundings, which will be consistent with their characters and harmonious with the Play-Idea. The author, however, must anticipate environment, for environment always has its influence—at least temporarily—on the motives of characters. The *spirit* of setting and how it motivates, environates, and alters the *conduct* of character, is one of the subtlest and most effective artifices within reach of the dramatist. It is not a rule but a law of conduct that what we would do in one place

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we would not think of doing in another. Environment frequently establishes a plausible reason for a character's much-needed radical departure in conduct.

(EXAMPLE 113.) *The seashore and musical comedy are occasions for a startling scarcity in female attire that would shock a busy thoroughfare. Even married men have been known to kiss pretty girls in dark corners, though they love their wives and children dearly. Moonlit evenings in June have produced many unhappy marriages because the contracting parties proved incapable of mutual love in daylight in December. Thé dansants—with or without wine, but usually without accompanying husbands or wives—produce a giddiness that breaks up many happy homes. Men kill their fellows in self-defence who abhor murder. The North Woods carry some back to the primitive and fill others with bigness.*

Long before this we must have realized the greater part that Character plays in Photodrama. After years we remember *Characters* and not a series of things they did; what they *were* and not how they acted. We still delight in intimate associations with choice characters of fiction and Drama. Who readily can forget Barrymore's "Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde"? But please remember that the character is great because the story is great; the part cannot become greater than the

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whole. Character is nothing more than a perpetual revelation of Motif. It is not sufficient that a character should be on the scene all the time and keep before the camera but—if he or she is the lead—that he should be the *greater being* throughout. And so we must conclude that Character drawing is accomplished by means of expression alone. What the Character expresses is important to the audience, not what he thinks or feels, which is a closed book without expression. Thinking is expressed by caption or vision; feeling always may be expressed in specific or reflective action.

(EXAMPLE 114.) *Thought is most dramatically expressed in dialogue through the caption: "JOL-LIBEE, I INTEND TO HOLD YOU SOLEMNLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ILL THAT COMES OF THIS!" "BUT THIS IS MY HOME NOW—BESIDES I HAVE NO OTHER PLACE TO GO!" Here we have expression of thought and immediate reaction. In the case of vision we may reveal what is in the character's mind which must be known to the audience to explain his consequent action, but which must be withheld from other characters present for plot reasons. The vision may look either forward or backward.*

When we come to the difficult task of writing a synopsis we must cast aside forever

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the opinions of those carping critics or sedulous apes who variously dub Photodrama "movies," or tableaux, or spectacle, or pantomime, or acting, or pictures, or captions, or dialogue, or star exploiting—independently. It is none of these older forms, but a *brand new Art!* When will people get this in their heads?

There has been much discussion about the use of the caption, for instance—which, by the way, should be largely suggested in the synopsis. The premise of those entering into this discussion has been, that Photodrama is pantomime or mimicry or pictures, or one or the other of older and less worthy mediums of Artistic interpretation. Whereas Photodrama is as new as the twentieth century, and as progressive. It has drawn more widely on material, methods, and effects than all the other Arts put together. It is like a half dozen others in parts, but absolutely different in the whole. It borrows from all the other Arts and yet it robs none.

Thus when we discuss the use of caption—which may include dialogue, description, humorous allusion, or any other literary embellishment that may enhance the value of the action—we are referring to but a small part without which the whole would be in-

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complete. Caption and dialogue do not interrupt action; if they do they are out of place. Rather they supplement and cement expression. They are part and parcel of the expression. If physical action were all it would be different. But dialogue, for instance, is not mere independent words, but molten symbols in the caldron of the play with all the other symbols—Characters, Setting, Action, pageantry, etc.—that go to make the image of pure metal that we build in the hearts of the audience. We illustrate books, we embellish them with every art of the printer, the bookbinder contributes his art; on the stage the scene-painter and designer contribute a vital quota, the lighting effects are almost paramount, the picture-frame proscenium is a fixture—embellishments all borrowed from lesser Arts to perfect the interpretation of a greater.

(EXAMPLE 115.) *The uses of captions are many: To indicate what is passing through the mind of a character as he reads: "THE FORMER EXECUTOR SUGGESTS THAT YOU BE APPOINTED IN HIS PLACE. THIS WAS HIS LAST REQUEST."* *Introducing a new character: MR. JOLLIBEE, TORRENCE'S SOLE FRIEND, MANAGER AND CONFIDANT. Dialogue: "BUT I HATE CHILDREN—THERE SHALL NEVER BE A NURSERY SET UP IN THIS HOUSE!"*

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*Humorous Allusion of the author, the only way of inducing an intimate style: HERE WE SEE CICELY, THE LITTLE THING AT MISS HENNABERRY'S FINISHING SCHOOL—NEARLY FINISHING THE SCHOOL. As a bridge of time: SEVERAL DAYS PASS THAT REGISTER A RADICAL CHANGE IN TORRENCE'S DULL LIFE.*

These captions are all of a piece with suggestion. They are fraught with the human-interest power of bringing things home to the audience, just as much as the croon of a mother to her babe, the buzzing of a bee on a summer's day, an old tune, and so on.

Captions are like links in the chain of the narrative that bind it together. It is suggested that the author write in the synopsis the captions which he thinks ought to appear. As the captions reveal many of the otherwise hidden springs that supply the flowing body that makes the play, it is but natural that the author should best know these otherwise invisible sources that contribute so vitally to the main stream. Much misguided motivation and false cues might thus be avoided.

*(EXAMPLE 116.) By capitalizing the captions they are readily differentiated from the rest and when typed in red are readily picked out by the scenarioist to be incorporated in the continuity. Also*

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*they stand out like guide posts to the dramatic highway of the action: In "The Primitive Woman" we readily trace the development of the Professor's love affair. "TAKE FOR INSTANCE THIS JADE TONIGHT—SHE IS THE IMMODEST REFLECTION OF A SOCIETY THAT IS DECADENT." "AND THERE WE HAVE A CAVE MAN—A FINE SPECIMEN." "I SHALL EXPECT YOU BOTH TO VISIT MY PRIMITIVE ESTABLISHMENT, WHERE I SHALL SPEND THE SUMMER WITH 'THE PRIMITIVE WOMAN.'*

We may now return again to one of our first principles. There can be no Drama without struggle and almost all Dramatic effects are produced simply through contrast. Contrast is the first thing we seek or create. It must exist in the essence of all effective Characterization, Situation, and Crisis. In this manner we produce Counterplot—by which is not meant mere by-play, however—wherein the doings of one Character offset those of another. Gradually Drama is generated by exerting pressure—through supporting Characters—contrary to the movements of the principal Character. We put on the brake, as it were, against the progressing motive of

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the principal Character. The more pressure we bring to bear, the higher the Dramatic tension we attain. For whenever characters pause—or poise—about to enter Conflict, the movement, interest and suspense are accelerated and race along at increased speed. The analogy is true in common experience, that at no time is suspense greater than the instant before we engage in Conflict with the excruciation of contact, the agony of endurance, and the doubt of outcome suspended for a crowded moment above our heads. This identical Suspense is what carries us effectively over the seeming gap between the end of one Part and the beginning of another.

(EXAMPLE 117.) Part II of "*Pierre Le Grand*" ends with—"Pierre in his great happiness does not see that hers is a thing apart!" And Part IV ends with—"Blake steals outside and telephones the police: "THERE HAS BEEN A VALUABLE NECKLACE OF PEARLS STOLEN AND I WANT YOU TO SEND TWO MEN WITH ME TO ARREST THE THIEF—PIERRE FONTANELLE." In each case we see supporting characters exerting pressure against the chief character in his effort to follow his motive to its goal.

Just as Drama is Conflict, or Struggle, so Struggle is the visible consequence of invisible Desire. Desire, as we have learned, is



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the basic motivating force behind all Drama. The principal character's Desire becomes the Photoplay's motive. Both the character and his Desire should be so strong that the progression of the Plot becomes spontaneous and automatic.

This brings us face to face with what has often proved to be a baffling problem: What is the "lead," or who is the leading Character, and how shall we deliver the lead into the hands and keeping of the character (usually meaning the actor-star) we most want to have it? First of all, by the lead we mean the character who shall lead and whom all the supporting characters shall follow. Having grasped this fact firmly we should turn to the story. What does it end with? Who wins out? The character who wins out is the lead. We hand him or her the motive and implant sufficient *Character* and Desire to carry it to the desired end. If we have in mind another for the lead other than the one the story demands, then we must change the story and its end so that our elected lead shall have the motive part.

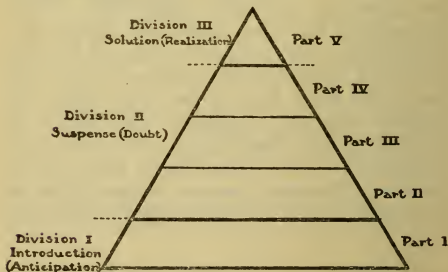
(EXAMPLE 118.) In "*The Primitive Woman*" we desire to give the lead to a woman. The professor is desirous of finding and studying a real primitive woman. Nan's desire is to become a

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*primitive woman for the occasion of teaching him an unforgettable lesson for having mortally offended her pride. By playing against her, the professor continually plays into her hands Dramatically. The motive is Nan's revenge—which she gets in the end.*

At this point we must recall our diagram and the rules for building a Photodramatic composition. We learned that there were three divisions to any such composition: I—Introduction of the Dramatic Problem II—Suspense over the ensuing Struggle. III—Solution of the problem.

(EXAMPLE 119.)



*We seek herein to make clear the differences between the divisions of dramatic composition and the building of the photoplay Parts.*

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Division I and Part I are identical in Purpose, substance, and effect. In Part I, we plant motivation, we begin to establish subsequent coincidences, we introduce characters in their *native* environment and indicate their trend, we reveal their inter-relationships with other characters, we put forward clearly the premise of the Play and thereby give a promissory note with interest due and payable on sight to the audience. If we analyzed the audience's mind during the first few moments of the Photoplay, we should find several persistent inquiries there: Why have we come? Who are these people on the screen? What is it all about anyhow? Part I then must answer, Why, Who, What, and Where. Part I consists in a process of powerful compression until explosion is imminent. To sum up, Part I is the general introduction of Action and Characters and their entanglement, and the effective planting of the story.

(EXAMPLE 120.) For example, in "The Primitive Woman," Part I consists in the introduction of a spirited girl who is noted with disgust by a young though musty professor of biology, as she does a rather risqué dance for the benefit of the Red Cross. He tells his mother and sister that here is your example of the decadent American society girl. Give him the Primitive Woman every time! The

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*girl overhears this and is filled with a desire for revenge. She tells her brother and others: "You watch me! I'll give this prig all the Primitive Woman he wants!" The thing is wound up ready to go. There are Motivation, Characters, and their relationships and environment. We have stated the premise of the Play. We have answered the questions: Why, Who, What, and Where; entangled the motives of the Characters, and put on the compression. The Part "ends with" the girl's declaring her resolution.*

Now all the Parts between the first Part and the last Part, as we have learned, are similar in Purpose and effect. Each ends with a Crisis concerned in the untangling of the crossed purposes introduced in Part I. The only peculiarity is that each succeeding Crisis seems more hopeless, for it undoes one tangle only to stand face to face with another that is worse! These intervening Parts answer the question, *How* is this thing ever going to be worked out? These Parts are a hot rebellion on the part of the Characters against things that are (i. e., in the play). While it is true that the problem set forth in the beginning of each Part may be solved therein, it proves to be but a step along the thorny path of Dramatic existence that leads to a seemingly more impossible step.

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(EXAMPLE 121.) Continuing with "The Primitive Woman": The girl sets forth to carry out her Purpose. Though rich, she disguises herself as a ragamuffin with bare feet. Not knowing quite how to manage it, she plans to pretend to be hurt and be brought to the cabin of her old nurse who lives on the outskirts of the estate where she pretends she lives. At this juncture in her rehearsal, she falls from the cliff almost at the feet of the amazed professor, really and truly hurt. She is carried by him unconscious to his own hut and not to old Mrs. Grundy's, the nurse! Here Part II ends..... And so having sprained both her ankles and having wrenched her body badly, the girl is obliged to remain indefinitely. Mrs Grundy is sent for. The girl gets better and begins to rub in the primitive stuff. The professor has fallen in love with her, and as a sweetheart he realizes that he could never marry a primitive woman! He actually begins to polish her! At this juncture, a letter comes from his snobbish mother and sister that they are giving a swell party and want him to come. He sees an opportunity to "bring out," as it were, the rough diamond he has discovered. The girl sees an opportunity to get square on these two who had joined in squelching her. Here Part III ends..... The girl goes and raises Cain at the party in pretending she is the original Primitive Woman. The Mother commands the professor to choose between the family and this she-devil. He chooses the girl, which secretly wins her love. They return to the hut to find the girl's fire-eating brother pistol in hand ready to kill the professor for ruining his sister. Nothing can appease him. Here Part IV ends.

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Thus the end of Part IV brings us to the most acute Crisis of any yet achieved, the outcome of which leaves no hope for attaining the Desired End of the Play. If the Play had been one of seven Parts, we should still have to provide for cumulatively acute Crises for Parts V and VI, reserving Part VII—or always the *final* Part—for the exploitation of the Climax. Two construction facts are worthy of note at this point. A Part may always be added by the introduction of a powerful Crisis with its cycle of Action, provided that it fulfills the Dramatic requirements of Part composition and its relation to its fellow Parts. Again, while five Parts are suggested as a standard of Photodramatic construction, with each Part conforming approximately at least to the mechanical length of a reel of film, it is possible to have seven Parts and only three reels of film. In other words, the length of a Part is a matter of construction, not measurement.

We have shown that anything but the final Crisis—or Climax—while it completes the cycle of Action of its respective Part, yet forms a *connecting link* with the Part that follows. Each Part is in a sense an Episode, each approaching ever nearer and nearer to the inevitable Climax.

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The question that has been haunting the audience's mind, and which the final acute Crisis has accentuated, is, *When* is this vexing, trying problem going to be solved, if at all? The final Part answers this *When*. At the completion of the last Part the Characters have attained normality again—as far as we and they are concerned. The time for Solution has arrived at our own suggestion, for we must have instilled the feeling that the end is near.

(EXAMPLE 122.) *And so we arrive at the final Part of "The Primitive Woman." A comic duel is fought between the professor and the irate brother. When she throws herself into his arms, the professor thinks the brother is the girl's accepted lover. When the professor goes away the girl realizes why, and also the truth. But he returns and the girl runs away. He is broken-hearted. Then he receives a note saying she will meet him. She does, as a fine lady in evening clothes; and then he realizes that she has been training him all the while for herself. "I really think I have hated the Primitive Woman all along myself," he tells her. The girl has fulfilled her Motive, achieved her ambition; what the Play started out to accomplish has been done.*

Thus we find the Climax—the biggest moment—of the Play, very near the end. The nearer the better, for all that remains is a distribution of rewards and punishments to

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those who have worked hard to bring about their own ends. The final phase is rehabilitation.

How shall we know when we have enough material for a Part? First, learn to build Parts perfectly. With the principles of Dramatic composition and completion you will know when you have arrived at the end. This is not difficult, since you establish the end before you begin. It is not necessary for painful exactness in the synopsis. Ours is a stern process of elimination. We tell only what the vision is, and not how to visualize it. Ours is a story of the Play, not instructions how it is to be played. Yet we must tell nothing that cannot be played—by living actors and in photographic light.

Is there a prescribed length of synopsis in words? No, because the length of the synopsis does not coincide with the length of the Photoplay. There used to be a 250-word length bugaboo, and writers deformed and decapitated their stories in a surgical effort to meet this law of Procrustes. If you can tell the complete story in two hundred and fifty words, well and good. But get it out of your head that a Photoplay is a mere Plot Outline. There is all the difference in the world between the clever dabster who can



## THE READABLE SYNOPSIS

make a Plot climb a greased pole, and the expert Artist who can so Emotionalize a Plot that the reader may instantly visualize a Photoplay. So, take ten thousand words, if you must, to give a bare Plot an individual, appealing, compelling, and worth-while human life. There must be interest, completeness, and gratification, without boredom or surfeit.

The synopsis must be highly readable and distinctly interesting, in the same esthetic sense that a short story is readable and interesting, if read by one other than the scenario editor.

It is very important to know what not to write, but this knowledge will come alone with experience.



IV  
DEMONSTRATION



*While the Synopsis is the Essence of the Photoplay, the Working Scenario is the Substance; the Synopsis tells What it is, the Scenario How To Do It.*

## CHAPTER XX

### THE WORKING SCENARIO

TEST OF A SCENE; TEXTURE OF IDEAS; SCENE AND SET; ACTION AND REACTION; CRYING NEED; LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT; INTERPRETERS ONLY; INTEREST AND COINCIDENT; MOTIVATION AND PLAUSIBILITY; CAPTIONS; TECHNIQUE; SEQUENCE AND HARMONY; NOTHING STATIC; EMPHATIC BUT NOT EXAGGERATED; PROGRESSIVE PLAY; MOVEMENT AND ACTION; TEMPO; METHODS; NATURALNESS; DIAGRAM AND COUNTERPLOT; USE OF DIALOGUE.

**C**ONCEIVING, creating, and writing a fine synopsis is a Fine Art favorably comparable with the work of creating any of the other half dozen Fine Arts. Constructing a working scenario is rather a matter of skillful craftsmanship. The one succeeds because the author is a genius, the other because

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the writer is ingenious. The one treats of the Vision; the other of its incarnation. It is another case of architect and builder. The builder makes concrete the dream of the architect. In the first it is a vocation; in the second an avocation. Most architects could become builders; few builders could conceive artistic buildings.

We have tried to make clear the relationship between synopsis-story creators and working-scenario builders. We want to make it clearer that the Story's the thing and the scenario is its shadow. The scenario adds not one whit to the Story, it merely translates it into working terms. It is the cue sheet, the property list, the setting chart, and the stage manager's notes boiled down into one consecutive and continuous set of directions. All others but the original are called upon to do nothing less—nor more—than *rewrite* the Story into working units, translate it into stage mechanics, run the Idea into celluloid. For the sake of example, all our references mean a real author and a real story.

There are good reasons both for and against the author's writing the working-scenario of his own synopsis-story. The chief reason in favor of the author's writing his own scenario comes from the fact that scarce-

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ly one per cent of the rewrite people are capable of perfect *interpretation*. True interpretation consists in translating the identical thought and vision of an individual into the symbol, the language and the idiom of the great mass of people, so that they may participate in the identical original idea. Some may argue that only God and the author know what is in his heart. If this is true he can never become a Photoplay author, for no sphinx can possibly write a synopsis. Authors are message-bearers, and if they cannot express their message, then they cannot lay claim to the title. And if the author does lay bare his heart, the crying need then is for a proficient interpreter. The skilled artificer, by means of a finished Technique, can translate and interpret the complete message of one Fine Art into the perfect expression of any other Fine Art.

(EXAMPLE 123) *Thus we see "Madam Butterfly" adequately translated into Music. We see "Trilby" gratifyingly put in the Drama. We see the drama of "L'Aiglon" perfectly interpreted by Painting. We see the spirit of "Joan of Arc" portrayed in Sculpture. The Architecture of Rheims Cathedral has been done into Poetry. The beauty of Venus has been limned in Literature. "Just a Song at Twilight" and "Over the Hill to the Poorhouse" have been fully translated into Photodrama.*

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The chief reason against the author's interpreting his own Play is in the question, Why should he waste so much valuable time? To an author, there is no more gruelling work on record than that of dissecting the spirit of his well-born offspring and then putting the flesh and bones about it in pieces.

Whereas our Short Story Technique centers about a persistency toward *concentration* of scene, material, and effect, our Photoplay demands constant *fragmentation*. And as our synopsis-story was told in cycles, or paragraphic Sequences, so must the working-scenario fragmentize from the very outset. Our process is that of *interweaving* expressive action in such a manner that the effect is that of continuity. The law of the scenario is, that nothing shall be static; it must be kept moving forward all the time.

Fragmentation is effected by means of Scenes. A Scene should not be confused with a set. A set is a Scene that is largely artificial. A Scene is a set, or location, plus action. There may be a dozen Scenes in a single set, shot from different angles. No Scene has a right to being in a given Play unless it is necessary. Every minute direction is put in the working-scenario, the least significant action of the characters is anticipated.



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The great point is that the right phenomena appear at the right time. We split up the action into fine particles, but so slice it as to make each particle react, or reflect, on its preceding and succeeding scenes.

(EXAMPLE 124.)

### Scene 16

*Interior Strong Library—CLOSE VIEW*  
*of Isabel, who has been deserted. She espies the crumpled telegram lying on the floor, where Dave in his haste has dropped it. She picks it up and unfolds it on her fan. Reads.*

### Scene 17.

*Interior Strong Library—INSERT*  
*Blank telegram outspread on fan with two hands holding it.*

### Scene 18.

*Interior Strong Library—MIDDLE VIEW*  
*Isabel in her cold almost cruel rumination over this is interrupted by the return of Dave's mother.*

### Scene 19.

*Dave's Bedroom—FULL VIEW*  
*Dave like a wild Indian is peeling off his evening togs.*

### Scene 20.

*Interior Strong Parlor—FULL VIEW*  
*One of the guests has just finished a solo on the piano when Tony looks at his watch, then hurries to mother, saying he must go.*

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

### *Scene 21.*

*Interior Strong Parlor—MIDDLE VIEW*

*Tony telling mother:—*

*Caption 9.—“I’VE GOT TO DO A LITTLE  
SLUMMING TONIGHT FOR MY PAPER.”*

*Isabel in particular is interested. Etc.*

The style of writing the Scenario is naturally and effectively sketchy. We briefly sketch every significant motion. Yet the resultant action must fit perfectly without showing the joints. Nothing is brought into or forced on a Scene unless it Dramatically assists in unfolding the Story. A new Scene is created by the action's demand for it and we are instantly taken to it. It falls in so logically with the Sequence that no explanation is needed. This brings out an essential point of difference between the pretty Play and progressive Drama. The pretty Photo-play is padded with any sort of hodge-podge that will enhance its prettiness. Progressive Drama relentlessly eliminates all excess trappings regardless of their prettiness.

The mere building of the working-scenario without reference to that ingenious faculty for the nice election of perfect Dramatic and interpretive symbols, is much simplified through the use of the diagram. Before us we lay our exact course of construction. The

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Lead takes the action through its cycle of culmination—or Part ending—while all other Scenes, with other characters, repeatedly give it zest. As the main line of Action, symbolized by the principal Character, proceeds, constantly we reveal simultaneous expression on the part of Fate and the other characters in Situation after Situation, heaping it on until the principal Character comes face to face with the Counterplot and a Crisis results.

(EXAMPLE 125.)

Scene 84.

*Interior Back Room—CLOSE VIEW  
of Joan and Dave, faces only.....Joan flings herself away and Dave turns on Coast.*

Scene 85.

*Interior Back Room—MIDDLE VIEW  
Coast draws back and starts for Dave.....Joan expresses herself and is rewarded by a threat from Dave.*

Scene 86.

*Interior Back Room—FULL VIEW  
Dave has set them all aghast including Tony.....  
Coast tries to sneak away, when Dave seizes him,  
then calls the parson.*

Scene 87.

*Interior Back Room—MIDDLE VIEW  
Showing Dave Questioning Parson, who nervously  
answers:*

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CAPTION 39.—“DAMN RIGHT I'M A MINISTER—BUT I AIN'T AN UNDERTAKER TOO.”

Scene 88.

*Interior Back Room—CLOSE VIEW*  
*of Coast who is literally dissolved with fear.*

Scene 89.

*Interior Back Room—MIDDLE VIEW*  
*Showing the effect on the proprietor, who decides to ring up the police.*

Thus we witness in the Scenario the slow, sure development toward the inevitable Part Crises, and of these in turn toward the Climax. Every time we “cut back” to another scene, or another group of characters located even in another place, it must have some Dramatic bearing on the Crisis in hand at this psychological moment. Again these effects are produced in four cases out of five through contrast.

(EXAMPLE 126.)

Scene 178.

*Interior, Joan's Flat—FULL VIEW*  
*Joan's words are too much for Dave, he turns as though to embrace her. Suddenly they are interrupted by a knock on the door. Joan signals the words “The Cops!” on her lips. Joan fearfully opens the door. No one is there.*

## THE WORKING SCENARIO

### *Scene 179.*

*Interior Joan's Flat—MIDDLE VIEW*

*Joan and Dave are both withering under the tension when the meek parson's head is stuck through the doorway very cautiously.*

It is to be remembered that while Scenes and Action appear consecutively in the working-scenario, they are seldom "made" or produced consecutively. Scene 100 may be made today, and Scene 1 may be made next week, and Scene 240 the week after next. It is clear therefore that each scene must be a distinct unit, the full significance of which may be understood independent of the foregoing or succeeding Scenes which are Dramatically inseparable from it. So—in the typewritten script—the line of location, telling exactly where the Scene takes place, should appear at the head of every scene, underlined. Following that, in all capitals, should be stated the position from which the view is to be taken, or "shot." In Chapter XXIII will be found the typographical equivalents of these typewritten devices. To change the view one iota means to change the Scene, for a Scene technically is all that may be photographed without changing the position of the camera or stopping it. Changing the location and the viewpoint of the Scene is a

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happy way of giving variety and prolonging suspense. For the foregoing reasons, pronouns should be avoided and each character called *by name* when referred to.

The life, vitality, and effect of the Photoplay scene is dependent on *change*. A sense of unreality and "tempest-in-a-teapot" effect is produced when scenes are "held" too long. This is due largely to the mechanical fact that the Photoplay "stage" is a tiny area limited by the focal lines of the camera's lens. We tire of watching a character, or characters, buzz around on a ten-foot square. Rapid and expansive change of Scene produces the illusion of a roving eye moving with luxurious ease and magical vision over the entire little world ranged by our characters. The axiom of Photodrama is that *nothing stands still*.

(EXAMPLE 127.) *We describe the scenery by seeing it in action. The screen is as capable of prolonged character study as fiction, only we witness it in the reflection and re-action of the Character against the moving and provocative panorama of Dramatic incidents. Thoughts, idea, philosophy, imagination, and spiritual struggle all may be vividly enacted through symbols of expression in Photodrama, leaving nothing within the realm of human experience—spiritual, physical, psychological—that cannot be depicted.*

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How many scenes to the Part? This depends largely upon two conditions. The first of these is the story tempo. A lively farce will step along so rapidly that no scene will be as long as a minute in length, most of them taking but a few seconds. Thus a five-Part farce may exceed 600 scenes. A dignified character Drama, the effects of which are heightened by character deliberation, may need but 200 scenes. The second consideration concerns the personal producing method of the director. Some directors cut up their script into tiny particles, constantly cutting back to previous or counter Scene, and shooting the Scenes from rapidly changing angles and making frequent and repeated closeviews. Thus it may be seen that the number of scenes to employ comes as a matter of Technical and personal experience.

Provided the script is O. K., the director's function is to bring out every ounce of Dramatic power that lies in the Story, employing every artifice of acting, every effect of light and shade, all available aids of location and setting and every mechanical means for stimulating and simulating naturalness and reality. However, the director should not be permitted to *change*, fundamentally, any script without the conviction, consent, and readjustment

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by the author. For many years there have been valid reasons for directors making changes in manuscripts, and much credit is due the genius of directors who have made numberless silk purses out of sows' ears. But that sort of thing must cease with the creation of a school of authors and scenarioists who *know* what Photodrama really is and master the difficult craft of writing it. Directors and actors are interpreters only and if—together with writers—each will study and perfect his own part, it is bound to result in a perfect whole. The too resourceful director often has been in the habit of perverting the Story his way when it was the author's vision to have it quite the reverse. Seldom do producers actually produce the Story that had tempted them to the point of paying a large sum of money for it, chiefly because of willful misinterpretation somewhere along the line.

Take the small matter of location or setting. The smallest inconsistency between condition and environment—the outside of the house with the inside, for instance—will shatter the audience's conviction. The physical habiliments of the Play must be true to type to avoid discord. Harmony is nothing more than naturalness, or consistency between Character, Environment, and Action.



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(EXAMPLE 128.) *Almost daily we see such discrepancies on the screen as: A priest saying mass without alb or chasuble; a judge usurping the part of state's attorney; a surgeon operating with bare hands—and so on. All little mis-mechanics that must appear correctly in the working scenario.*

There are directors who scan a script superficially and then proceed to produce without the working-scenario, or other aid outside their omnipotent brains! This single-track, autocratic crew are justified in their claims for entire screen credit for the results. They belong with Nero and other egoists who burn their empire with gusto that they may have a famous setting for singing their own praises.

We have discussed the functions of the working-scenario in brief only, feeling that a deeper analysis of the subject might tend to divert the espoused purpose of this volume, which is to elucidate the author's relation to the Photodrama. The working-scenario steps quite entirely out of the field of true creation into those of collaboration and interpretation.\*

\* A future volume in the Author's Hand-Book Series will undertake the subject of "The Working Scenario—A Practical Treatise," by the same author.

*A Character we meet in Fiction, Drama, or Photodrama should become more Real than one we meet in Flesh and Blood; for the One's Soul is laid Bare with every Desire, Ambition, and Motive revealed, while the Other's Face, Hand, and Say-so is all we ever know of his Soul.*

## CHAPTER XXI

### SEVERAL EFFECTIVE CASTS

“THE ROMANCE OF A SELF-MADE WIDOW”;  
“THE PRINCESS FROM THE POORHOUSE”;  
“HEIRESS FOR A DAY.”

**T**HE following Photoplay was produced under the title of “The Self-Made Widow,” by the World Film Corporation with Alice Brady in the title role.

(EXAMPLE 129.)

THE ROMANCE OF  
A SELF-MADE WIDOW  
A Comedy Drama in Five Parts  
BY HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

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#### CHARACTERS

SYLVIA SMITH.....(Lead).....She is the ultra-romanticist in word and deed; she projects

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herself into an imagined world until it becomes more real, and above all more alluring, than the actual world of the drab country town of Blue Bank; her conversation consists in the main of her adventures, romances, and experiences with her day-dream people; in the opinion of the unimaginative townspeople she is a plain LIAR; but she has not a malicious, dishonest, or unwholesome thought in her make-up; what happens of a romantic nature she tacitly accepts as though it were the decree of some romantic god; naturally she would retain few friends among the women of the town; for the men of Blue Bank she has little concern, though she is continually courted, for they are too dull in comparison with the brilliant males of her dreams; thus she shuns Life to cultivate an imagined paradise.

FITZHUGH CASTLETON.....A pampered young scion of wealth; he is sole heir of a big estate and fortune; but he is stalwart and normal and longs for the things that stalwart and normal men do; thus he comes to have abnormal desires for abnormal experience; he wants to throw off all the very things that Sylvia most desires, and is ready to take the first opportunity to do so and to flee to the open arms of adventure; he comes to love Sylvia for the same reason other men shunned her; namely, the glamour of romance that hovered about her and the adventure into which she had cast herself; and so he goes the world over seeking a rich adventure and fails, only to find it within his own mansion that he had left because it was so dull.

LYDIA VAN DUSEN.....Likewise a scion of wealth, and Fitzhugh's neighbor; she is masculine

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and loves masculine and daring men, hence her early repugnance for Fitzhugh, to whom she has been engaged for years; she comes to love Bobs for these reasons.

**BOBS, THE BLACKSMITH.....**A sailor and blacksmith aboard ship by trade, but a gentleman by preferment; he has great difficulty in learning the etiquette of the gentleman, but is so good-natured about it that no one objects except Lydia's austere mother.

**BUTTS, THE BUTLER.....**Fitzhugh has been left alone in the world in charge of Butts; while he adores Fitzhugh, yet he believes in bringing him up in the pampered way regardless of rebellion; he becomes general manager of the household during his master's lamented absence.

**MRS. TOOTLE.....**Sylvia's staunch friend; she alone believes all that Sylvia says, although she hears only a small portion of it through her ear trumpet; and Sylvia tells her everything; she is very belligerent and has a provoking and ludicrous way of misinterpreting half the things that people attempt to tell her; she assumes regal bearing on her sudden access of riches; she takes violent likes and dislikes.

**MRS. VAN DUSEN.....**The cold aristocrat; she disapproves of almost everything, so that her opinion may be indisputable; everything common is doomed; her daughter and she never agree on anything; she tries in vain to freeze Mrs. Tootle, who, not being able to hear her well modulated voice, does not understand what it is all about; and Mr. Bobs is too genial to be frosted by her.

**CROSBY.....**A good looking though obviously sporty crook; his particular accomplishment is for-

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*gery, for he can imitate any one's handwriting; he marries Sylvia.*

*MRS. CROSBY.....A catty little blonde of the chorus-girl variety; jealous and suspicious.*

### OUTLINE

*Part I.—The Quest of Romance*

*Part II.—To the Depths of the Sea*

*Part III.—To the Ends of the Earth*

*Part IV.—The Exhaustion of Riches*

*Part V.—The Gates of Eden*

*Here follows the synopsis.*

*Note—The above is a romantic Comedy Drama, so that much of the comedy note and spirit is injected into the cast itself. It all aids the casting director in quickly and accurately choosing his types.*

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The following Photoplay, "*The Princess From the Poorhouse*," was produced under the title of "*The Royal Pauper*," with Francine Larrimore in the title role.

(EXAMPLE 130.)

THE PRINCESS FROM THE POORHOUSE

*A Poetic and Romantic Drama*

*(A Modern Fairy Story in Five Parts)*

BY HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

TIME: *The Present.*

PLACE: *A Mill Town; a City; a large Estate; a rolling Country.*

### CHARACTERS

THE PRINCESS.....*Irene.....(Lead).....Little orphan of unknown origin who has grown up in*

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

*the poorhouse; she is the sunshine of all she meets; a child of rare fancy, which she has fed chiefly from the pages of a worn fairy-tale book that has fallen into her hands; with a strange persistence she believes in fairies and makes her chosen court followers believe in them too; she makes over that portion of the world and life she enters, into a modern fairy-land; her influence seems potent in its parallel to enchantment herself; even after the childish fancy disappears there still remains the belief in the power of fairies; she is no automaton in this realm, but the moving spirit who enchants, brings happiness, dissipates sorrow, performs miracles, dispels evil spirits, and breaks wicked spells; she is the soul of sweetness and above suspicion and reproach; she is gifted with gentleness and grace that gives her regal majesty on all occasions.*

*PRINCE CHARMING. . . . William the Conqueror. . . . Whom we see first as a court follower in the poorhouse; through fondness for the Princess he is won over to the cause and admitted to the charmed circle; he is never quite able to throw off the charm—especially of the Princess; adoration becomes love; he is endowed with an indomitable will that later conquers all things and forces him through the Tangled Forest; what he believes, that he acquires; as an inventor he performs the great miracle.*

*THE KING. . . . Old Man Muggins. . . . A pauper who has been so long in the poorhouse that he has become childish and is a little below Irene and William in intelligence; he implicitly believes all things the Princess says; he goes about in rags and tatters, and is possessed of a great shock of grizzled hair and beard; he has a cunning manner of seeming to*

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*be over-bright by squinting his eyes and cocking his head to one side when contemplating anything; he is suspicious of all people except the Princess.*

*FLANDERS.....A Hound Dog.....The inseparable companion of the King.*

*THE FAIRY GODMOTHER.....Mrs. Chandler.....The sweet, gentle but abused wife of Chandler; lonely amidst riches and wishing for a child.*

*THE OGRE.....Chandler.....The cruel lord of all he surveys; a tyrant and an oppressor; lives only amidst his business thoughts, which too are oppressive; loves neither man nor beast; forbidding and sinister in appearance; owner of the great weaving mills that have cornered the market and crushed the workers.*

*THE WICKED SUITOR.....Carruthers.....A dashing, handsome villain in love with Irene and her money; bewitched by the Princess.*

*THE WITCH.....Mrs. Bunty.....Manager of the paupers; ugly and up to all the specifications of a typical witch; hooked nose, deepset eyes, talons, and is harsh.*

*THE POOR WOODCUTTER.....Mr. McCarty.....Frail, kindly; works in the mills woodyard.*

*THE WOODCUTTER'S WIFE.....Mrs. McCarty.....Whose only discontent in life is that she has no children; whose by-word is "Sacrifice"; love is her creed.*

*OTHER CHARACTERS.....Ad lib.*

*MOTIF: That in Life there is often a parallel of romance equal to the most fanciful fairy tale, and that all things are his or hers whose Faith is strong enough to Believe.*

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### OUTLINE

*Part I.—The Valley of Enchantment*

*Part II.—The Castle of Discord*

*Part III.—A Miracle Comes to Pass*

*Part IV.—The Treasure That Was Bewitched*

*Part V.—The Coming of the Real Prince*

*Note.—All the suggestive glamour of the fairy tale is thrown about the characters in the hope that they will inhale and exude it.*

The following Photoplay, "*Heiress For A Day*," was produced with Olive Thomas in the title role.

(EXAMPLE 131.)

### HEIRESS FOR A DAY

*A Dramatic Comedy of Modern Society  
in Five Parts*

BY HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

### CHARACTERS

HELEN THURSTON.....*Heiress for a Day*  
.....*Manicurist in the barber shop of the Grand Hotel; a spirited girl inheriting her parent's desire to possess and spend money, although circumstances hold her down to the grindstone of hard work and little pay; she hates coercion and insincerity and yet falls a victim to both; she seeks the love of THE man, disdaining flirtation as being sacrilegious.*

JACK STANDRING.....*Heir to a Million*  
.....*Very serious young man who cannot stand the artificial young women of his set; he hates anything artificial or fraudulent; he shuns the women*



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of society, yet is honestly attracted to Helen because of her genuineness; as he loves her for her simplicity, so he comes almost to lose that love because of her feigned duplicity.

*SPINDRIFT*.....*A Prospective Heir*.....*Man about Town of unsavory record; loves Helen, yet is willing to sacrifice her to attain his own ends.*

*OLD HODGES*.....*A Multimillionaire*.....*Helen's rejected grandfather; crusty old man with no liking for either Helen or his nephew, Spindrift, whom he thinks are after his money; he realizes that these two are his sole heirs, however, and must get it, so he sets a trap, hoping both will cheat themselves out of it.*

*MRS. STANDRING*.....*Millionaire*.....*Jack's mother; who not only guards Jack but is constantly trying to make an advantageous match.*

*MISS ANTRIM*.....*Who Seeks to Marry an Heir*.....*An ambitious, scheming adventuress who is after Jack's heart and his money.*

---

### OUTLINE

*Part I.—Where There's a Will*

*Part II.—There's a Way*

*Part III.—She Who Dances*

*Part IV.—The Piper Must Be Paid*

*Part V.—An Heiress and Then Some*

*The Synopsis follows.*

*Note.—Thus it may be gathered that the casting director and the actors themselves may discern from almost a single glance not only the qualities of the character they are called upon to become, but the entire emotional significance and course of their part throughout the Play.*

*The Synopsis is a Photoplay's Soul,  
Created and Athrob with all the Po-  
tentialities of a Complete Cycle of  
Life ready to take its place among  
the Prime Experiences of a Genera-  
tion the Moment a Body is made for  
it in which to step out of the Realm  
of the Imagination into the World's  
Playhouse.*

## CHAPTER XXII

### AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

#### "PIERRE LE GRAND"

THE following complete Synopsis is printed just as it was written and accepted. With few exceptions, it will be found as a model for the foregoing discussion and examples. It is suggested that it be studied and reviewed as an exemplification of every paragraph of the text. Herein we find an example of the fully extended script. Every thought in the play has been given full reign to leave no room for misunderstanding.

A seven-Part example has been chosen in preference to a five-part, because it is possible to demonstrate the Feature Photoplay and its superior construction more fully by taking an

## AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

example that includes the five-Part play and adds two more Parts. We thus illustrate the principle of Part-building when applied to more than five Parts. So we solve *additional* problems in a practical, commercial demonstration.

“Pierre Le Grand” was produced under the title of “Heart Strings,” with William Farnum in the title role. The play was emasculated, however, of all virility by eliminating its sterner aspects and substituting sentimentality. The result therefore could scarcely be said to be the play the author wrote.

(EXAMPLE 132.)

Henry Albert Phillips      All Fiction and Dramatic  
The Lambs Club              Rights Reserved  
New York City, N. Y.      By the Author

### PIERRE LE GRAND

An Emotional Drama with Pathos and Comedy—  
In Seven Parts

BY HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

THE MOTIF: There are Great Hearts—like Fixed Stars—which though storms may rage that cloud the Horizon and threaten their very Existence, shine and smile ever on, guiding Weaker Mortals in their Upward Climb.

### CHARACTERS

PIERRE FONTANELLE.....A Grand Figure among the simpler French people of Old Quebec;

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he is a potential Musician and Composer of rare ability, with a cherished Dream of Musical Fame in the Secret Garden of his heart; but he is Dreamer rather than Doer, and has none of the harsher traits of commercial Ambition; yet he is the sublimer Doer when it comes to Sacrifice for others—especially his little sister, Gabriele; he is emotional and always ready to dream his Dream but needs a force to push him on to action; he is gentleness personified, and part of his creed is an abhorrence to violence and combat, which makes his enemy think him a coward; withal, he is intensely human and, baited beyond endurance, turns upon his tormentor with a ferocity such as only the long-suffering are capable of.

OLD LA TOUCHE.....A Doer with other men's Dreams; Pierre's best friend and "discoverer"; a mass of ceaseless energy, gesticulations, harmless ferocity and big-heartedness; he is all for business; he sees a chance to become famous by making another man famous; he is an eternal bore and domineering "manager" of everything he comes in contact with; yet he is impressive, and actually makes people do the things he intends them to do and they don't intend to do; he is bombastic and blustery and is always ready to take the foreground and settle the affairs of the fishmonger or the nation; yet in the last analysis his affairs seem to bungle, though he is not conscious of his failure and lives on the glory of conquest.

GABRIELE.....Pierre's weak little sister; while she loves her brother, her devotion to Le Boeuf amounts to an obsession that will carry her any lengths; Le Boeuf controls and compels every thought and act in her early life.

## AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

LE BOEUF.....A big handsome reprobate; he has little heart or soul; while his feeling for Gabrielle is real in the beginning, his desire for money is always greater and he uses her as a tool or a stepping stone to pelf.

ALVA BLASHFIELD.....A typical New York society girl who is drifting with the tide of her caste; she has her pronounced tastes, chief among which is music; she is ready to marry Blake, who is very wealthy and years older than herself, if he will let her and her tastes alone; she holds herself aloof from all things and submits to all cold conventions until she meets Pierre; he then becomes part of the inner life that will never die and which Blake can never touch or comprehend.

BLAKE.....A phlegmatic society man, well along in years, who is annoyed by anything unconventional; he looks upon Alva as a chattel and resents the invasion of Pierre.

## AN OUTLINE OF THE PARTS OF THE PLAY

- Part I.—A Dream of Youth
- Part II.—The Beautiful Lie
- Part III.—The Dread Spectre
- Part IV.—The Blessed Demoiselle
- Part V.—The Sublime Sacrifice
- Part VI.—The Supreme Struggle
- Part VII.—The Embers of a Dream

### Part I.—THE DREAM OF YOUTH

We first meet Pierre playing in a field where country people have come out for a holiday and to dance. They are dancing a quaint folk dance

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that has been long ago imported to French-Canada from their dear France. On Pierre's face is that wonderful smile that is known all over the Province, but in his eyes we can see a faraway Dream that he is living that moment. Occasionally someone drops a coin in the hat by his side, or children come and caress his arm, and then he directs that sunny smile on them for an instant only.

La Touche is coming along the road in a queer cart known to Quebec, loaded with merchandise. He stops his horse and looks on a moment, and then recognizes Pierre, and his face lights up and he gets down, adjusts himself for a dignified entry among the yokels whom he literally pushes aside, and makes a swath straight for Pierre, at once becoming per force and audacity the central figure. The playing is stopped and consequently the dance. They greet with mutual effusion: "MON DIEU, DREAMER, YOU STILL PLAY TO THE YOKELS OF THE PROVINCE WHEN YOU HAVE PROMISED ME YOU WOULD GO TO PARIS AND LEARN TO ENTHRALL THE WORLD!" La Touche thus reproves Pierre, who regards him with a look of pain, and then proceeds to explain, and La Touche deliberately takes him away with him in his little cart.

Gabriele at home is pleading with her lover Le Boeuf to take her with him, but he tells her he cannot yet. Suddenly she espies Pierre coming down the road with La Touche, and fearfully hustles Le Boeuf from the house, he smiling cynically at her thought of danger to him.

Pierre enters, now thoroughly inflamed with the vision that La Touche is branding on his soul. He catches Gabriele joyously to him: "AND HERE IS

MA PETITE GABRIELE—SHE IS THE BEST PART OF MY LIFE—WHEN I GO TO PARIS SHE MUST COME TOO." La Touche signifies, of course. Gabriele gives a frightened look and goes pensively to a corner while the men continue to plan. Pierre empties his pockets of coins, giving the largest to Gabriele. La Touche counts them. Pierre lifts the tile in front of the fireplace and takes out a bag of gold and together he and La Touche count it. "LET US SAY, IN A MONTH FROM TODAY THE FUND I HAVE BEEN SAVING FOR FIVE YEARS WILL BE COMPLETE, AND THEN I WILL BE READY TO GO!"

We see Le Boeuf being put out of his uncle's house. He is telling the servant: "MY NEPHEW IS A RASCAL—YOU WILL SEE THAT HE NEVER ENTERS MY HOUSE AGAIN." Le Boeuf leaves with his ever-cynical smile, and we see him enter a gambling place and produce a thick roll of bills and join the game.

The Day marking the end of the month when Pierre said he would have his Five-Year Fund complete we find him about to be totally surprised through the efforts of La Touche who has gathered all his neighbors and friends for miles around. Gabriele is in on this secret and has invited Le Boeuf, who comes with his cynical smile.

Pierre's attention is attracted elsewhere and La Touche forms the people outside like a procession and then they suddenly burst in with all the simple joy of their type. La Touche the practical and commercial takes a bowl and puts it on the table and makes each one put a coin in. In fact, he is busy in every part of the room marshalling, com-

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manding, interfering, reprimanding, and letting no one have a thought of their own in the matter. He pulls a piece of paper from his pocket on which he has jotted the program he has arranged. First the ladies through a dumpy spokeswoman present a typical Frenchy artificial bouquet. In the midst of her speech La Touche yanks her away and takes the floor, but not before she has embraced the shy Pierre. Then follows a quartet of four overdressed yokels whom La Touche attempts to lead in vain. The result is a startling exhibition that makes La Touche perspire freely. Pierre is frightened and pained at the so-called music.

La Touche now steps forward to make a presentation Speech which he has written down and has great difficulty in reading. Pierre awkwardly listens and then is soon immersed, as all are, in the vivid presentment of the things he is going to do, La Touche acting out how he will play, how the audiences will respond, and taking in turn the parts of all the episodes of his Fame Period. But the speech is so long that old ladies sleep, children play, and the youths gape in vain, though all remain in agonized solemnity.

Le Boeuf stands regarding the whole adventure with wearied contemptuousness, most of all Pierre, whom he considers a big softy. Gabriele has sought his side and endeavors to cling to him. The other guests regard him with dislike.

At last comes the Presentation of the gold-mounted Baton: ".....WITH WHICH SOME DAY MON AMI PIERRE—FONTANELLE LE GRAND THEY SHALL CALL HIM—WILL LEAD THE ORCHESTRA AS IT PLAYS ONE OF HIS OWN COMPOSITIONS!" There is



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loud applause that rudely awakens the sleepers in alarm and Pierre the Dreamer takes the baton tremulously in his hand. He cannot speak, but his smile tells them what is in his full heart. At length he says: "WHEN I RETURN FROM PARIS—WHERE I SHALL STUDY UNDER THE FAMOUS MAITRE DUPRE—IT IS FOR YOU—*FIRST OF ALL*—I SHALL PLAY MY COMPOSITIONS!" Then he plays for them and stirs their souls.

Formalities over, La Touche again seizes the reins and proposes a toast and all raise glasses. Pierre has seen Gabriele intimately standing by Le Boeuf for the first time and calls her. She tries in vain to have Le Boeuf come with her. La Touche stands on a chair and all raise their glasses enthusiastically except Le Boeuf. Pierre says to Gabriele: "THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU AND I SHALL SEE OUR DEAR FRIENDS, SO LET US SAY FAREWELL TOGETHER!" Several times he glances uneasily at the handsome big fellow with the curled lip.

La Touche cries: "TO THE COMING GREAT MASTER OF MUSIC—FONTANELLE LE GRAND!" All are about to drink when several policemen appear at the exits with Le Boeuf's uncle. The company put down glasses that are never drunk. Le Boeuf attempts to slink away, when he is pointed out and seized. A sigh of relief goes up, which is dispelled the next moment by Gabriele, who breaks from her brother's side and throws her arms about Le Boeuf.

Pierre in soul agony over the terrible truth behind it all, demands of Le Boeuf an explanation. Le Boeuf smiles defiantly and tells them to ask

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Gabriele. But Gabriele has swooned. Pierre, tragedy and determination in his eyes, tells them to bring the prisoner and tenderly carries Gabriele into another room.

La Touche disperses the crowd just after a physician is called from among them. The uncle is telling Pierre the story: "THE RASCAL MUST GO TO PRISON UNLESS HE PAYS BACK THE THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS HE HAS STOLEN FROM MY SAFE!" Pierre is called in the next room by the doctor. "SHE IS VERY ILL—HER LIFE HANGS ON A THREAD—SHE IS ABOUT TO BECOME A MOTHER!"

Pierre is struck to the heart. He staggers to the dividing curtain and approaches Le Boeuf with a look that for a moment gives him misgivings. He goes up as though to throttle Le Boeuf, just as Gabriele's cry of fear arrests Pierre. She has come to and seen this. Then Le Boeuf hastens to explain: "IS IT THEN A CRIME THAT MY WIFE SHOULD BECOME A MOTHER?" All are skeptical, and Le Boeuf with his evil smile again produces his wedding certificate from his inner pocket.

Le Boeuf is then yanked away by the officers and Pierre is left standing there. It is Gabriele's weak little voice that reawakens him to her peril. He puts his ear down: "IF THEY SEND HIM TO PRISON I SHALL DIE!" Pierre turns a startled look. Then suddenly the smile breaks on his face. He goes to the fireplace and gets out the bag and shows it to her. She understands. He empties the cash into his pockets and hurries out.

Pierre arrives at the police court just as the

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magistrate is about to send Le Boeuf to jail. Pierre gives the astonished uncle the money. They count it and give him back a few pieces. Le Boeuf is discharged, laughing loudly as he exits uncomprehendingly and thinking Pierre did it out of fear of him. The money that was to have bought a Dream has saved the Life of his Beloved and let loose a Devil destined to destroy most of the Precious things to come—but not all.

### PART II.—THE BEAUTIFUL LIE

Pierre returns to the cottage to find Gabriele a premature Mother and seemingly dying. They make a great fight for her life. They take Pierre out. Then in the agonized hours of the night that follows he prays and what he prays he plays and so composes his wonderful "Prayer Sonata."

Neighbors open their windows and listen with clasped hands. Passersby pause and sigh. Pierre concludes in a return to belief in a Great God and His goodness with the tears streaming down his face.

Gabriele, too, vaguely senses it and feebly keeps time. Doctor tells him to come and say goodbye, but when they arrive there is a turn for the better.

Gabriele gets slowly better. And something new enters Pierre's life—it is little Pierre, the mite that Gabriele has mothered. Pierre in his sister's hour of trial and in his big-hearted childish efforts to divert her, puts aside his own Great Sorrow completely, and is Pierre of the Sweet Smile again. Little, tender, and over-delicate Pierre he plays with and croons to hours at a time, and so the little thing comes to nestle in his heart and bring him true joy.

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Old La Touche meets him again and asks in surprise why it is that he has not gone to Paris: Pierre says: "ASK MECHANTE GABRIELE—A LITTLE HAPPINESS OF HERS HAS DETAINED US A LITTLE."

Gabriele is wan and impatient and does nothing but yearn for Le Boeuf, the father of her child, and it stabs Pierre to the heart to think that she still yearns for him with her brother and her child by her side. She spends most of her time at the window watching and waiting. At length she cannot any longer resist Pierre's big-hearted appeals and they become a gloriously happy group. He is again Pierre the Light-hearted and begins again to build a Paris Fund.

Le Boeuf has become a downright crook. A conference among him and some of his thieving companions has brought out the fact that they need to protect themselves and their pelf through having a woman about as a "fence." Le Boeuf then thinks of his Gabriele: "WHAT WE NEED IS A WOMAN ABOUT AS A 'FENCE' FOR OUR OPERATIONS—I'LL HAVE HER HERE TOMORROW."

Gabriele is startled into ecstasy when Le Boeuf appears. He is half agreeable and she is sickeningly adoring. He tells her that he has provided a home for her. She brings their child, which sets him aghast and perplexes him for a moment. She wants to wait for Pierre, but Le Boeuf is insistent and makes a feint to leave and then she quickly writes a note: "MY LE BOEUF HAS COME FOR ME AS HE PROMISED.....COME TO SEE US OFTEN, MON GRAND FRERE.....I AM SO HAPPY....."

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Pierre too has spent a happy day. He comes home singing and with an armful of gifts for his darlings. He thinks at first that they are playing hide and seek. Then he finds the note. His big heart is shaken as he walks the floor, futilely whispering: "MON PETIT PIERRE! MA PETITE GABRIELE!" Then he seizes a little sock that has dropped, which he holds to his breast. Again he plays his Prayer Sonata.

La Touche has dropped in to drink with some friends in the Quarter whom he treats liberally, having made himself a great man by having made another man famous. He remarks: "WHO KNOWS—PERHAPS MY BELOVED PIERRE IS ALREADY FONTANELLE LE GRAND!" At which moment the inimitable strains of Pierre's melody reaches their ears. The company laughs at La Touche, who scowls and stalks out. He appears before Pierre in a stormy mood. "TIENS! WHY DO YOU NOT HURRY AND BECOME FAMOUS AS I HAVE PROMISED—YOU MAKE ME RIDICULOUS!"

It is always La Touche that gives balm to Pierre's wounds and brings him back within the thrall of his dear Dream again. His sweet smile reappears, though a curtain of sadness has been lowered behind it. He gets a bottle of wine and soon they are immersed in a new plan for the dream of Fame. La Touche picks up the little sock when Pierre is out of the room. It gives him some annoyance as he thinks he smells a rat: "CHERCHEZ LA FEMME! YET SHE SHALL NOT ROB US OF FAME." As he is leaving Pierre promises: "SOON MA PETITE GABRIELE WILL RETURN—THEN I SHALL BE VERY HAPPY

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AND VOILA! AT ONCE WE SHALL ALL GO!"

But Gabriele does not return, for she still worships and clings to the handsome brute who alternately pets and maltreats her. Each week Pierre sorrowfully though smilingly goes to visit her and, seeing her want, leaves money. He sees that to interfere will mean inevitable tragedy.

Le Boeuf sees in Pierre's non-interference only cowardliness. At length on one of his visits Pierre finds the little frail Pierre dead in his mother's arms. This time Le Boeuf drives him from the house, when he would turn on him, and it is Gabriele who interferes and beseeches him to go.

The secret Police visit Gabriele and make a search of the place and find a large quantity of pelf. They then set a trap for Le Boeuf, who eludes them and gets in and learns the truth. He is mad with rage and flings the cowering Gabriele out of the door where she stumbles and falls down the rickety stairs. Le Boeuf finds her a mass of inert flesh. She seems to be dead, and with real fear written on his face he slinks away in the darkness just as the watching policeman comes up.

Pierre is sent for and he comes to find his little Gabriele with her hip badly broken. We see something new in Pierre for the first time, that resembles a wild lion of vengeance. Instead of a smiling, sentimental musician, he becomes a scowling, blood-thirsty brute. But to no avail, he cannot find Le Boeuf.

Gabriele does not die, but instead emerges from it a helpless cripple. The smile slowly returns. But Gabriele has seen Pierre's strange look. Her first anxious thought has been for Le Boeuf and she calls Pierre and asks: "OH, PIERRE, YOU DID

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NOT HURT HIM—YOU DID NOT—” Again and with a twinge of pain he sees how things lie and he has to promise Gabriele that he never will hurt him: “THEN, MY GABRIELE, WE MUST LEAVE QUEBEC—CANADA—RUN AWAY FROM HIM—ELSE I CANNOT KEEP MY HANDS FROM—FROM—” He goes through the motions of throttling, but Gabriele’s horrified look stops him. He smiles piteously and kneels contritely, asking her to forgive him. Their predicament is critical, for Gabriele’s expenses have exhausted all their funds. Then the bright hope of his life “LA TOUCHE!” flashes through his mind and he writes him.

La Touche, with a gingham apron on, is bossing everyone within half a mile of his confiserie in Papineauville when he receives Pierre’s letter. At once he is blusteringly angry and doffs his apron and starts down to give Pierre a piece of his mind. He blusters in: “MON DIEU! YOU ARE YET HERE! MUST I BECOME A CLOWN FOR THE PEOPLE BECAUSE YOU ARE A SNAIL!” On seeing the plight of poor Gabriele he is at once softened. When told the truth he cannot understand all, but asks him why he does not sell his precious violin: “NON, MON AMI, THIS IS WORTH MORE THAN A MAN’S LIFE TO ME—FOR A CENTURY MY FAMILY HAS SACRIFICED ALL BUT LIFE ITSELF TO PASS IT ON.”

They puzzle over the problem and then La Touche gets the brilliant idea: “VOILA, I HAVE IT—OUR FAME IS ASSURED! I SHALL BECOME YOUR IMPRESARIO! YOU WILL GO TO NEW YORK! I WILL SELL MY CON-

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FISERIE AND JOIN YOU!" He then gives Pierre funds and their plan is ready to begin at least.

### PART III.—THE DREAD SPECTRE

Thus Pierre and Gabriele come to New York and by chance land in the artist colony in Greenwich Village. They are assisted in getting to rights by several of the frayed-out types who dwell in the converted mansion they take two rooms in. Pierre protests especially when an old Dreamer who has dreamed in vain actually brings them in victuals, and he tells them prophetically: "I HAVE BEEN HERE SEEKING FAME THIRTY YEARS—MY POCKETS WILL BE EMPTY AGAIN TOMORROW, THEN YOU WILL HELP ME." Thus we show the spiritual and mutual aid and poverty among the Clan of the High Art—always hopeful; up today, down tomorrow; gambling on Fame; seizing at straws; spending sleepless nights, but their days peopled with glorious Dreams or dire Want. But nothing can now seem to dampen Pierre's vision of Fame. He is sure that he is very near to it now.

Pierre starts out with a high heart and boldly assaults the highest musical centers. He seeks a try-out at the Metropolitan Opera, the famous orchestras, the theaters, the palatial photoplay houses—all in vain. One tells him: "FOR GOD'S SAKE GIT OUT O' HERE AND GIVE OUR NEW ORCHESTRION A CHANCE TO PLAY, WILL YOU?" So they bully him and throw him out.

Gabriele is very morose and Pierre has the double task of lying to her and pretending.



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At length all the money is gone. Then Pierre tries playing on the streets, is passed coldly by, and finally he is roughly arrested by a policeman who nearly throttles him for not having a license to beg and showing no disposition to hand out graft. Each night he throws the supposed proceeds of the day into Gabriele's lap. Each day the pile grows smaller, for his little Gabriele must live and live well for she is so delicate and unhappy. He eats next to nothing and daily grows weaker from hunger.

The old Artist drops in again one day and reads the truth in Pierre's emaciated face: "DON'T BE DISCOURAGED—FAME IS JUST PLAYING YOU ONE OF HER TRICKS—I'VE BEEN SPEAKING TO A FRIEND OF MINE WHO NEEDS A MUSICIAN."

The whole complexion of affairs is at once changed for the emotional Pierre. He informs Gabriele that he is now about to achieve fame in truth tomorrow, and he buys a bottle of wine with his last penny and invites the old Artist to share it with him and the two of them cross the portal of Dreams, and one would think that they had their Desire. He plays and soon others drop in to join them and Gabriele too takes on something of the Myth.

But the Job proves to be a miserable affair. It is a "red ink joint" in a dingy basement where the old Artist comes to tipple because of its cheapness. Here Pierre has to play in accompaniment to a blowsy woman pianist and a sour piccolo player whose music saws his artistic soul raw. They have no idea of how to play well and blame their mistakes on Pierre. Between all these circumstances

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Pierre's life is made truly miserable. He gets a dollar a night and "keep" for the poor job of playing to a questionable gathering from 9 P. M. to 3 A. M.

Gabriele is always awake and waiting for him, and then so weary and heartsore that he can barely stand he must tell of the wonderful success he is and describe the bright lights, the dazzling life and the beautiful women, and offer new excuses why he cannot take Gabriele to hear him—yet. He shows her how he appears at the encores and gives vivid descriptions that are *visioned*. He brings home a discarded bouquet and describes how it was given to *him*. Then his playing and pantomime is interrupted by several indignant fellow tenants pouncing down: "SAY—IF YOU *MUST* PLAY—GO DOWN TO THE RIVERFRONT!" Thus poor Pierre's soul is tortured beyond endurance, though there is only a momentary glimpse of pain—then the *smile*.

Then one night Pierre sees a Dread Spectre that threatens to envelop his little Gabriele and so destroy *all* happiness.

It is Le Boeuf and two companions, who take a table and are carousing when suddenly Le Boeuf pauses in terror as though he saw the gallows. Simultaneously Pierre's bow sags and his hands clinch. He loosens his collar from the passionate emotion.

Le Boeuf sneaks out. Pierre's anger slowly fades in the thought of Gabriele, whom he has promised not to kill this Le Boeuf. Poor Gabriele! He must hasten to her—she is his Life.

Meantime all eyes are directed upon Pierre, for the music has stopped dead. The accompanists are berating him. But the proprietor likes him and the

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patrons like his music after all. Pierre cannot go on. The Boss is solicitous: "HERE, FOUNTAIN, YOU AIN'T WELL—HERE'S FIVE DOLLARS WHICH I'M RAISIN' YOU EVERY WEEK—OUR KIND LIKES YOUR PLAYIN'—BE SURE TO BE ON TIME TOMORROW."

Outside Le Boeuf is telling his companions: "I'VE GOT TO GET RID OF THAT BIG BOOBY BEFORE HE SQUEALS ON ME." One of the men hands him a blackjack and Le Boeuf starts out trailing Pierre and waiting his opportunity to strike.

But Pierre has cooled off. He can think of but *one thing*—this big brute owns his little Gabriele body and soul. Again he must *hide*. He stops in a little dry goods shop and with the five dollars buys Gabriele a pretty frock. This will please her and the new ordeal may be easier.

Le Boeuf sees the dress and at once his fears vanish and he laughs as he sees ahead of him a good living without work. Gabriele is *alive!* He follows Pierre home and gets their number.

Gabriele is surprised at Pierre's early return and overjoyed with the frock. Then Pierre suddenly clasps her protectingly in his big arms and holds her, rocking her to sleep like a child, a look of futile agony on his face.

Pierre is afraid to go back to the cafe and thus loses the only job he has had. Again they are flotsam and jetsam in the Great City of Few Dreams.

Back in Papineauville we have seen La Touche trying almost in vain to sell out his confiserie. This shocks his vanity, as he had thought that everyone who heard of it would rush to him with an

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offer. At length strangers who are not in the least prepossessing consent to take the business for six months with the option of purchase. This is a bad bargain, but La Touche consents because he is many weeks overdue with his dear Pierre, whose Fame he has solemnly promised to make.

Affairs have reached their very worst with Pierre when who should blow in like a gale of Southern wind but La Touche. The whole house is aroused by the noise and fuss he makes and come in to see what it is all about. La Touche is arrayed regardless. He wears silk hat, cane, frock coat, fierce moustaches and all that goes with it. He enters like a brass band and with an irresistible air of importance, enthusiasm and bombastic energy. He introduces himself to the somewhat astounded assembly: "I AM LA TOUCHE, THE IMPRESARIO—I HAVE COME A LONG WAY TO MAKE HIM FAMOUS!"

At once all is changed, temperamentally and literally. Pierre forgets all things in the flood of optimism that La Touche lets loose in their hearts. "HOW IS IT? ARE YOU NOT RICH? I WILL SHOW THESE STUPID AMERICANS WHAT CLEVER ONES WE ARE! TIENS!"

So next day La Touche and Pierre go out. Pierre is rigged up like a Continental musician. La Touche goes directly to the swellest restaurant. He makes his way through all barriers. His nerve is superior to the nerviest city people. They take him at first for a buffoon, then he turns on them and bowls them over. He sends in a pompous card to the Proprietor: JEAN BAPTISTE MARIE ALENCON LA TOUCHE—SOUS-CAPORAL DANS LA GRAND ARMEE—IMPRESARIO—

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SUPERIEUR DE FONTANELLE-LE-GRAND—PREMIER VIOLIN ET COMPOSER—(CONFISEUR A PAPINEAUVILLE, P. Q.). This card is too much for the proprietor's curiosity and afraid of missing something worth while, though understanding not a word of it, he has La Touche brought in.

La Touche enters like an emperor, the shy Pierre following. La Touche out-bullies the proprietor when he gets on his high horse, and finally brings him into submission. He informs him: "FONTANELLE-LE-GRAND EES ON HEES VAY TO PAREE BUT HE VEEL PLAY FOR YOU BY MY SPECIALE PERMISSION." The proprietor thanks him. A fine contract is made.

The two walk out in a maze after Pierre has played entirely to satisfaction. To Pierre this is Fame.

At home, however, Le Boeuf has stolen in and has taken Gabriele in his arms. He pretends to be repentant and promises to take Gabriele with him soon if she will do *everything* he asks. It is quite obvious that she will. She promises not to tell of his visit.

Pierre in his great happiness does not see that hers is a thing apart.

## PART IV.—THE BLESSED DEMOISELLE

We find Pierre's name emblazoned outside the famous restaurant alongside that of La Touche the great impresario. Here it is discovered by Ignatz the Leader of the orchestra, who is both jealous and outraged at not having been consulted. His nose is thus put out of joint. He protests in vain

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to the proprietor and then swears vengeance by bringing the Union down on him.

But a period of blessed prosperity ensues. Daily Pierre comes home laden with gifts for Gabriele and she is happy though oblivious. All she can remember is that Le Boeuf took her in his arms.

Pierre plays at the restaurant in a mood of sheer dazzling joy that delights the diners and makes Ignatz hotter with jealousy. Then comes the night of nights when Alva Blashfield, Blake and their party visit the restaurant. Pierre plays and his music enters Alva's heart like a refreshing draft. Pierre is not conscious of her or the impression he has made until the encore, when her enthusiasm shows no bounds, much to Blake's disgust.

Then Pierre and Alva look into each other's eyes, yes, very souls. Then Pierre plays again, not for the throng, but for her. He *knows* and she *knows* Blake is annoyed and shows his displeasure in vain. Pierre plays for the first time his Prayer Sonata, for HER, to her. The gayety stops and an air of depression in accord with the music takes its place. Many of the guests leave with almost conscience-stricken faces as though they had come face to face for the first time with their wicked selves. The proprietor is alarmed and hurries to Ignatz: "FOR GOD'S SAKE, CUT OUT THE FUNERAL MARCH—THESE TIRED BUSINESS MEN WANT NOTHING BUT RAGTIME—GET ME!" Ignatz points to Pierre as the one responsible for this number.

Blake especially has complained of the Sonata. He returns sullenly to the table to find Alva gone.

Alva has approached Pierre, who turns and is blinded by the new emotion that envelops his be-

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ing as she whispers: "OH, IT WAS SO WONDERFUL—YOU WERE WONDERFUL! I SHALL COME AGAIN!"

Ignatz has been joined by the Walking Delegate of the Musicians' Union, who now comes to the proprietor threateningly. Ignatz introduces the delegate triumphantly, who announces: "THIS GUY IS A SCAB—AND UNLESS YOU FIRE HIM NOW THE UNION SAYS YOU'LL GET NO MORE MUSIC IN THIS JOINT—SEE!" The proprietor argues in vain, then pleads, with the result that Pierre is discharged.

Pierre goes home hovering between heaven and hell. An angel has descended at his feet with the annunciation that he is wonderful—and he always will be wonderful after that, because she has said it. But just now he had been thrown out of heaven!

La Touche receives the news and is furious beyond description: "THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE! I SHALL SHOW THIS MONSIEUR UNION WHO LA TOUCHE IS! I SHALL PULL HIS NOSE!"

In his impractical way Pierre keeps his money as of old in a vase where Gabriele can hobble to it and get coins for their daily needs. The contract had brought a large number of small bills and to the impractical Pierre they were rich again.

The old Artist enters and finds Pierre once more downcast: "AH, I SEE THAT YOU PLUCKED ONLY A TAIL FEATHER OF THE BIRD OF FAME—THERE IS A WAY TO FORGET, HAVE SOME?" At which he produces a bottle of liquor, which Pierre refuses. He goes out and Pierre strums a few notes that show the

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color of his amorous soul and his dawning Love. Gabriele in the next room looks up as though someone had called. She lays her hand with a sigh on her breast and asks him to play it over and over again.

La Touche goes out in the evening to the restaurant bent on reprisal and justice to his protege. The proprietor will not see him, and he paces up and down in front of the orchestra until Ignatz appears, bowing and smiling, whereupon La Touche pulls his nose soundly: "YOU SHALL NOT NAME MY PIERRE A SCAB—A PIECE OF DEAD SKIN—HE IS FONTANELLE-LE-GRAND!" The proprietor orders him put out forthwith and he puts up a noise and a fight that can be heard a block away.

Alva has come again tonight to hear Pierre, and it is she, much to Blake's disgust, who brings the melee to a halt by touching the irate La Touche on the arm and signaling the others away. She asks where Fontanelle is. La Touche seeing commercial possibilities is calmed instantly: "AH, MADAME, YOU VEEL VANT FONTANELLE-LE-GRAND TO PLAY AT A MUSICALE—N'EST C' PAS?" Alva had not thought of this, but the idea is not bad and offers an excuse. She nods, takes down the address. La Touche now walks slowly out with unwonted dignity.

### PART V.—THE SUBLIME SACRIFICE

To Pierre the news of Alva's visit means that heaven is full upon him. He is in a constant flutter of happiness that knows no bounds.

La Touche, too, is in a fever of preparation for madame's promised visit, and as in all things he



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purposes to make it one of the most theatrical events in his career. He will stage the whole thing with becoming atmosphere. He gets his idea from the print of "The Beethoven Sonata" hanging on the wall, which he intends to reproduce exactly. He hires the services of people he picks up here and there to furnish figures for the composition, and he rehearses them with harsh severity. They are all bad actors and need him constantly gesticulating in the foreground to maintain anything like a semblance of the desired effect.

The day upon which Alva is expected sees the tableau arranged with sweating difficulty by La Touche. Pierre is posed at the piano with his violin. The others are supposed to listen, enthralled by the air. Most of them go to sleep or center their frail attentiveness on less artistic things, and others cannot keep their eyes off the jumping La Touche, who as she enters takes his position behind Alva, engaged in wildly directing the affair almost in vain.

When all is a la Beethoven Sonata, La Touche beckons for Alva to be ushered in. All seemingly ignore her, though in reality they are looking cross-eyed in their efforts to look two ways at one time. La Touche asks her politely to wait for a moment. He, behind her back, holds the tableau, trying with difficulty to appear enraptured, while really shaking his fists at the fishlike postures.

Alva is truly impressed. Yet strangely it is Gabriele with her eyes upon her whom Alva notices first, and goes straight to her with a smile and outstretched hands. Alva touches the girl's heart as she approaches the wheel chair and speaks with her in French.

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Pierre is impressed beyond words by this action of Alva's. He says simply with his open smile showing like a window into his heart: "I THANK YOU FOR THIS HAPPINESS YOU GIVE MY LITTLE SISTER—THAT IS THE GREATEST DESIRE IN MY LIFE." Alva looks at him with a deep sympathetic understanding. Gabriele is entranced by the kind lady who has completely won her heart.

La Touche hustles the supers out of the room and manages it so that Alva and Pierre are left alone in the room. He peeps from behind an adjoining portiere.

Thus Pierre and Alva spend a wonderful Hour together, an hour that neither of them will ever forget, and in which each is irresistibly attracted. Pierre now plays, now ingenuously discloses his Dream of going to Paris to meet Maitre Dupre, now becomes shy under the pressure of circumstance, now emotionally enthusiastic.

La Touche at length not being able to hear what they say and seeing an hour has passed is too impatient to stand it longer approaches, obviously trying not to interrupt by his coughing and so on. "PERHAPS MADAME AND FONTANELLE-LE-GRAND HAVE MADE ALL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MUSICALE?" They had not even mentioned it and show they are embarrassed.

Alva insists on giving them a check for five hundred dollars in advance. She kisses Gabriele and tells her she is coming again to see her only, and leaves them all in the clouds, La Touche with the big check, Gabriele with the tangible Sympathy, Pierre with a Love that will never die. The musicale is to be given within a week.

## AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

Le Boeuf calls, in the men's absence, obviously down and out. Gabriele is sorry for him and discloses the secret of the money vase and he helps himself to nearly all of the contents, Gabriele turning painfully away so that she will not see. Just then there comes a knock at the door. In consternation Le Boeuf runs to seek a hiding place in the next room.

Alva enters, followed by a footman bearing an armful of potted plants and cut flowers. Alva kisses Gabriele again and asks her to go out for a ride in the car in vain. As she is leaving she says: "NOW, ON THE DAY OF THE MUSICALE, I AM GOING TO COME FOR YOU EARLY IN THE MORNING TO SPEND THE WHOLE DAY LONG."

Gabriele, overjoyed, has forgotten all about Le Boeuf until he appears all excitement. For Alva had removed her coat and disclosed a wonderful pearl neckband. Le Boeuf sees a way out of all things. He tells Gabriele that she must get that necklace for him—*steal it*. Gabriele recoils, and then Le Boeuf wheedles, threatens, and finally promises that this will enable him to come for her and take her away with him. At last she consents to his wishes.

Pierre and La Touche come home laden with gifts and goodies for their darling, but she is only sad and morose. Pierre says he has spent all their change and goes to their vase "bank" and finds it practically *empty*. He turns to Gabriele startled with fear of the serpent.

Gabriele looks guilty, but when he asks her if she knows she shakes her head, no, and he will not pain her, but is stabbed to the heart with appre-

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

hension. La Touche comes in with a diagram on paper for the musicale and Pierre is taken away from the subject. He throws off the care with a smile, though it will persist in coming back.

Then the wonderful day of the musicale arrives, and with it Alva for Gabriele with a new frock and all. Gabriele goes with her, her heart sore with the weight of the coming treachery.

Blake wants to know, "YOU MAY TRUST THESE CANUCKS WITH THINGS OF VALUE, BUT I DON'T."

Alva tells him later when he continues to annoy her: "I AM SORRY YOU DO NOT LIKE THIS MUSICIAN—I WOULD BE AFRAID TO TELL YOU WHAT I THOUGHT OF HIM."

Evening approaches and La Touche personally attends to Pierre's make-up. Then he sends him to the musicale alone. "YOU MUST TELL THEM YOU CANNOT PLAY WITHOUT MY PERMISSION, AND I, LA TOUCHE, SHALL APPEAR WHEN THEY ARE BEGINNING TO FEAR THEY WILL NOT HEAR YOU."

Gabriele is being amused by Alva as the latter dresses for the evening. At length Gabriele gets hold of Alva's jewel case and amongst its contents finds the neckband. There is an agonized moment of indecision, then the opportunity comes and Gabriele slips the pearls into a wrist bag that Alva has given her.

Alva has just come back, and noting Gabriele has put down the case, hurries to it and puts on her rings. Then she misses the pearls. Looks around hastily. An early guest is announced and finally in despair she shrugs her shoulders, gives an order about Gabriele, and hurries out.

## AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

Pierre arrives, shy and retiring. Then all present must wait interminably. Alva comes and asks Pierre to play. He says, no, he cannot without La Touches permission. Then Alva has a surprise for Pierre. She brings forward a big Frenchman: "PERMIT ME TO PRESENT TO YOU FONTANELLE-LE-GRAND, M. DUPRE, THE GREAT FRENCH MASTER OF MUSIC YOU WANTED TO STUDY WITH!" Pierre is overwhelmed and the two chat until the arrival of La Touche is announced.

Blake has noted his fiancee's missing neckband of pearls from the first: "SINCE IT WAS I WHO GAVE YOU THAT BAND OF PEARLS I DO NOT THINK IT AMISS TO ASK WHERE THEY ARE." Alva implores him to wait. He agrees.

Then the footman reads La Touche's card to the mingled amusement and amazement of the impatient guests. Then Sous-Caporal La Touche appears in the full dress uniform of a Turco of the Franco-Prussian War, blouse, bagged trousers, sword and all, gold lace and a broad riband across his breast, and numerous medals. All are astounded, but are finally impressed as he lengthily introduces Pierre, who shyly retreats to the shadow of the curtain while La Touche struts up and down in front of the assembly.

Then Pierre plays to and for Alva alone, and Alva is with him in spirit and truth.

Dupre is enthusiastic and with Alva makes an appointment for five o'clock the next day, promising him all that he has ever dreamed. Pierre kisses his hand.

Pierre is directed to the room where Gabriele is

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

waiting for him. It is Alva's room, and he emerges from it carrying Gabriele as Blake and Alva come along the hall, Alva having promised to come up and convince him that the necklace is not lost. Blake registers his suspicions as Pierre and his sister pass on.

They search in vain for the pearls. Blake questions the maids and learns that Pierre and his sister and Alva have been the only persons in the room since the necklace was last seen. Blake bids Alva goodnight, registering in his look news that will be bad for her. Alva is very uneasy.

Blake goes outside and telephones the police. "THERE HAS BEEN A VALUABLE NECKLACE OF PEARLS STOLEN AND I WANT YOU TO SEND TWO MEN WITH ME TO ARREST THE THIEF!"

### PART VI.—THE SUPREME STRUGGLE

Pierre's ecstatic mood is somewhat dimmed by Gabriele, who is solemnly sad. The two hold each other in arms a minute when La Touche bursts in with copies of the evening papers. He dispels their gloom by undignified conduct in his exuberance. Then they all sit about and talk. They are interrupted by a knock on the door. Gabriele starts and trembles. Pierre notices this and goes to the outer door, where he finds Blake and two policemen.

Blake at once points Pierre out as the man. Pierre shakes his head vehemently. Then Blake says: "WELL, IT WAS EITHER YOU OR YOUR SISTER!" Pierre staggers as though struck a blow. At once he changes, and after a flash of pain seems a confession. Asks a moment to say

## AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

goodbye. He pitifully tries to think up something to say and then comes the idea. He puts that dear sweet smile of delusion on his lips and comes in apparently overjoyed: "I HAVE GREAT NEWS—MAITRE DUPRE HAS SENT FOR ME—PERHAPS WE SHALL GO TO PARIS YET—I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I SHALL BE GONE. LA TOUCHE, LOOK AFTER MA PETITE." Then he kisses Gabriele and leaves them discussing the great news wildly.

Thus Pierre is taken to jail broken hearted. He has confessed to stealing from her who had become the foremost angel in his Greater Dream.

In the morning Blake calls on Alva and tells her what has happened. She protests it never could be. He smiles and says it is because Pierre has confessed. She then turns on him and commands him to leave her. She then thinks and thinks, until finally she recalls having come in the room for her jewel box which Gabriele was toying with when she put something in her wrist bag. She will go to Gabriele.

Gabriele is being entertained by La Touche, who has bought *all* the morning papers, which have columns about the musicale and wonderful things to say about Pierre. The photographs of La Touche and Pierre appear in several of the papers, La Touche having sent them to all. La Touche is walking up and down in his dressing gown with his thumbs in his arm pits, gesticulating and pantomiming what he intends doing.

Alva comes and Gabriele is conscience stricken at the sight of her. She throws off La Touche, who tells her the latest news about Pierre having gone to M. Dupre. In the next room she takes Gabriele,

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

who is filled with remorse, and soon Alva sees her Pierre's release. Gabriele still denies the truth, however, and then Alva goes straight to the bag and takes the neckband from it.

Gabriele is ashamed and mortified. But Alva realizes the grand man her brother is and hugs her and lets her weep on her shoulder, then hurries away after telling her that she will buy a splendid necklace for her very own.

La Touche has had a little excitement of his own in receiving a telegram: YOUR TENANTS HAVE RUN AWAY, TAKING WITH THEM EVERYTHING THEY COULD LAY HANDS ON IN THE CONFISERIE—YOU HAD BETTER COME AT ONCE. There remains but one thing to do, and that is to hasten back to Papineauville at once and wring the neck of everyone in sight. Thus La Touche leaves Gabriele, saying her brother will soon return. Yet taking with him a Dream that has come true of his dear Pierre.

Alva, with something new shining in her eyes, hurries away to the police station and demands Pierre's release, explaining that she has found the missing jewels and has them with her.

Pierre is brought out of the cell silent, and his pain and shame are very great when he sees who it is. Alva goes straight to him and takes his two hands in hers and he lifts his head which he has hung till now. "AH, I SHALL NEVER THINK OF YOU AS FONTANELLE AGAIN, BUT AS PIERRE-LE-GRAND! REMEMBER, TOMORROW I BRING MAITRE DUPRE TO YOU, AND THEN—"

Pierre stands for a long time where she has left him. Looking at the hands she has held and bask-



## AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

ing in the realization that SHE is his Dream made flesh. The police rudely wake him up and tell him to get out while the going's good.

Le Boeuf sneaks in in a fever of happy expectation. At once he demands of Gabriele, "Where is it?" She looks at him speechless and piteously. She sees him for what he is for the first time. She is a stricken doe with the fierce hound at her throat. There is murder in his eye. "SO YOU LET THE SWAG SLIP THROUGH YOUR FINGERS, EH? WELL, I'M GOING TO KILL YOU THIS TIME, YOU—"

Pierre the Emotional has climbed to the skies again in which his Sun seems shining with new lustre. He comes home aglow and happy in the thought that Gabriele did not take the jewels, as he believed. He has bought flowers and knick-knacks for her, and he tiptoes in, expecting to surprise her. He listens at the door of the next room and opens it only a crack.

Le Boeuf at this moment has just given the poor clinging Gabriele a shove from him that has sent her sprawling on the floor. She lies there quivering and helpless and waiting face down for the final blow.

Pierre droops like a flower in a cold blast. The happiness fades from his face and gives place to a carnal look. He has heard, and he realizes the whole truth. With a silent commanding jerk of the hand he beckons Le Boeuf from the inner room.

Le Boeuf, strangely impelled, comes out. Pierre locks Gabriele's door. Then, like a crouching tiger, and with working hands, Pierre approaches Le Boeuf. Le Boeuf looks behind quickly, espies Pierre's precious violin where it has lain uncased

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

since the night before. He backs to the table until his hands come in contact with the instrument. This is his one opportunity. He raises the violin above his head. The onrushing Pierre cringes at the sight. Le Boeuf does not hesitate a second but lets Pierre have it full over the head. The priceless violin flies into a thousand pieces!

Pierre sinks down with a moan as though struck a vital blow. Gathering up some of the fragments with trembling hands he presses them in mental anguish to his lips and heart. Gradually his eyes take on a murderous gleam, his jaws set, his nails dig into his working hands. He is a tiger now, and only the heart's blood of his victim will compensate, he is mad with the wrongs that for years have been piled up on his breaking heart, he is wild because of the personal insults and injuries that his darling Gabriele has endured, and reason vanishes at the sight of his precious violin destroyed!

Le Boeuf is about to descend when he hears a group of tenants ascending. He sees that will not do and turns to the roof. He is delayed getting the hatch off. He is barely outside on the roof when Pierre is seen coming. He closes the hatch and fastens it.

Gabriele has raised herself and listens, now for the first time in positive revolt and revulsion against the brute Le Boeuf. She wants herself to kill him. She cannot get out, and fears for her Pierre now.

Pierre has come to the fastened door and with an unguessed strength in his madness fairly rips it from its fastening and appears like a rapacious beast emerging from the hole.

Le Boeuf has discovered to his horror that the building is connected with no other and projects it-

## AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

self alone into the sky. Either he or Pierre—perhaps both—must conquer or perish. Pierre is deliberately refastening the hatch. It is Pierre who discovers a sort of iron ladder scarcely visible which he wrenches from its moorings and flings over the side. Then panting like a beast and crouching in his movements, Pierre goes after Le Boeuf. He is more like a gorilla than a man as he chases Le Boeuf from point to point about the roof.

Pierre finally gets hold of the now terrified Le Boeuf. Le Boeuf's one move is to try to hurl Pierre over the ledge. Pierre wants nothing but to keep his victim on the roof and gradually beat and tear him to pieces. Le Boeuf defends himself with the strength of a man fighting for his life. Pierre fights with the brutal gratification of a beast of prey mauling his victim. He laughs mirthlessly at every blow.

The men seem evenly matched at first, and the fight is herculean, and sometimes they are actually hanging over the edge of the roof. But nothing can withstand the mad unfeeling fury of Pierre's strength. He is literally beating Le Boeuf to a pulp. Both men are torn in body and raiment and covered with blood.

Le Boeuf's only hope is the pile of fallen bricks that the chimney has become because of their fighting about it. He manoeuvres the fighting nearer and nearer to this pile of bricks. His hand at length gets close enough to seize one and then he smashes Pierre on the head, nearly braining him. Pierre releases his hold and Le Boeuf breaks away.

Pierre shakes himself and with the blood running into his eyes he groggily gropes his way toward

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

Le Boeuf who, still afraid, has moved with an armful of bricks to a wide ledge or coping. Here he waits for Pierre to get within range, a brick in each hand. When Pierre is within ten feet he lets one fly and it grazes Pierre's head and he goes down on his knees. But again he rises with even less strength and decision. Now Le Boeuf takes deliberate aim and Pierre draws nearer, seemingly unconscious of his certain peril. Le Boeuf raises the missile high, steps back and—the whole coping gives way and over he goes!

Pierre creeps to the edge and looks over, and gradually the mist of madness clears, and with it comes to him the worst of all his ordeals. *He has killed a man!* Or if not, he tried to. He has killed that which Gabriele loves more than any other thing. He will go down and try to put life into the body himself. Muttering and lifting his eyes to God for forgiveness, he creeps to the hatch, and fumbles weakly.

Finally he gets or falls down the stairs to his floor. There he is about to go down further when he hears excitement below. One of the tenants has just found the body and he hears her tell the policeman: "A MAN HAS JUST BEEN MURDERED—HIS BODY IS LYING OUTSIDE MY WINDOW!" So this is the end then!

From this instant Pierre becomes in fancy, if not in truth, a fugitive from justice. He must ever flee the heavy hand of the law. He sneaks into their room and lets the terrified Gabriele out.

Gabriele is the one who is changed now. Her joy is half complete on seeing her brother alive. He says nothing, but she *understands* and by her manner approves. She is now the protector of her

## AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

poor Pierre who has given up *all things* that were his for her. She tenderly bathes him, binds his wounds and soothes him. "AH, MY GABRIELE, IT IS TERRIBLE! YOU KNOW I COULD NEVER KILL EVEN THE SPIDER THAT BITES ME!" He breaks down and sobs in her lap like a child, as he picks up a piece of his dear violin. Every moment he starts up and tries to appear composed, as though the police were entering now. He is waiting for them to come and get him.

The police have examined the body and identify it: "OH, JUST ANOTHER GANG MURDER—THIS IS 'JULES THE CANUCK' AND YOU CAN SEE HE HAS BEEN KILLED BY ONE OF HIS PALS IN A FIGHT." So they dismiss the matter.

But not so with Pierre. He has packed a few things and they are ready to steal away under cover of darkness. He has just finished a letter to Alva, which he leaves as a blind to the police on the table. Then he carries Gabriele tenderly but in terror down the stairs. Then the wheel chair and they are off into oblivion, leaving the Fair City of Dreams-Almost-Come-True.

Alva comes with Dupre the next day, having made all plans herself to see to it that Pierre got all things on the ladder of Fame. She finds only the letter: WHEN YOU RECEIVE THIS YOU WILL KNOW WHY WE CAN NEVER MEET AGAIN—THOUGH YOU SHALL NEVER BE ABSENT FROM ME. AS A LAST FAVOR I ASK YOU TO INFORM M. LA TOUCHE THAT I AM GOING TO PARIS, WHICH WAS HIS DEAREST WISH, AND SHALL BE ALWAYS GRATEFUL. PIERRE.

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

And "Somewhere in Canada" we see Pierre and Gabriele in her wheel chair skulking along a highway. Gabriele is so tired, but she is so solicitous of Pierre, and the two are bound together now with a Golden String of memory. He kisses her tenderly. "I WOULD HAVE FACED THEM AND TOLD THEM THE TRUTH BUT FOR THEE, MY POOR LITTLE SISTER—THOU HAST SUFFERED SO!" Then they resume their journey, looking fearfully about from right to left for strangers from whom to hide, Pierre's big returned smile illumining the way for weary Gabriele.

### PART VII.—THE EMBERS OF A DREAM

Several years have elapsed.

We meet La Touche, considerably aged, a little lame and half blind. That memory of the Fame of Fontanelle-le-Grand which he created has become an obsession. Anyone who will listen he tells about the wonder of it. He has had a medal cast which he wears pinned to his breast for that great service to "Art and Humanity."

One day he is passing through the Lower Town of Quebec and he hears the notes of a violin. They strike a cord of memory, and he approaches toward the street fiddler playing to a group of children. His hat is at his feet, into which a few pennies have been tossed.

This is our Pierre. He has grown a beard, his glance is shifty, his clothes ragged. He plays on, but he neither sees nor hears. His eyes are set on an Invisible Star. When he "comes to" it is with a start of fear.

## AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

La Touche hobbles up and sees *something* familiar in his half turned figure. He touches him on the arm, his face filled with hopeful anticipation.

Pierre cringes under the touch and turns a face filled with terror, that at last the law is upon him. Pierre is shaken to the foundations of his tender soul at the sight of La Touche, whom he at length identifies. He is torn between many emotions—pity, gratitude, sorrow, fear. He is almost ready to confess his identity when his lips form the word "Gabriele" and he shakes his head and closes his lips tightly.

La Touche shakes his head disappointedly: "FOR A MOMENT I THOUGHT YOU WERE FONTANELLE-LE-GRAND—IT WAS I WHO MADE HIM FAMOUS, YOU KNOW—HE IS IN EUROPE NOW—PROBABLY PLAYING BEFORE CROWNED HEADS—" La Touche has called attention to his medal and rattles on.

At the mention of his name, Pierre is filled with fear that someone may hear, and hustles La Touche into a nearby wineshop in a secluded corner.

La Touche takes a great mass of brown and worn clippings from his pocket, which he tenderly handles as he reads them to Pierre, who sits with knit brows and listens: "FONTANELLE-LE-GRAND A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS! PROTEGE OF MISS ALVA BLASHFIELD WITH LA TOUCHE THE FAMOUS CANADIAN IMPRESARIO ACCLAIMED BY SOCIETY!" La Touche rambles on and on. Pierre, keeping him from making too much noise, sits there shaking his head.

Pierre finally tells him that Fontanelle-le-Grand is dead. La Touche, angry and ready to fight him:

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

"FONTANELLE-LE-GRAND DEAD, YOU SAY? THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE—FONTANELLE-LE-GRAND CAN NEVER DIE!" The two are ordered out for making so much noise, and La Touche leaves Pierre standing there, repeating his words as he goes away talking vehemently to himself.

Pierre returns to Gabriele in their neat but ill furnished little place that supposedly guards their identity. Gabriele has changed. She it is whose every thought is for Pierre, whom she guards and comforts. He is so immersed in reflection that she cannot rouse him, until suddenly his face illumines with his old smile as he repeats almost fiercely triumphant: "IT IS TRUE—FONTANELLE-LE-GRAND CAN NEVER DIE!" Gabriele nods, but tells him to speak that name more softly.

Pierre and she are very happy again as he dumps the coins from his pocket on the table. He finds a bank note for \$100. Tears come in his eyes as he thinks and then knows it was the dear old La Touche: "AH, MA PETITE, I AM HAPPY AGAIN! FOR NOW WE SHALL BUY MANY PRETTY NEW THINGS FOR THEE!"

Next we see Alva and her decrepit husband Blake arriving at the hotel in Quebec. Blake has aged and has more than one foot in the grave. Alva has matured into a beautiful woman.

Blake tells her querulously: "FOR THE LIFE OF ME I CANNOT SEE WHY YOU HAVE COME TO THIS RAT-HOLE OF A PLACE!" She smiles reminiscently. She puts on a heavy veil and tells him despite his protests that she is going to look around the Lower City. She means to visit every corner of HIS dear town.

She is coming back to the hotel that night when



## AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

she hears certain notes from a violin that transfix her. The music comes from a dirty little wine shop. She enters, much to the amusement of the patrons. She goes into a secluded private drinking room where she can see in a half-dark corner Pierre playing his "Prayer Sonata." He stands oblivious to all things else. His eyes are again fixed on the Invisible Star, a half smile on his lips.

Alva is struck deep with pity and sobs. She too had thought he was playing to Royalty abroad! Then she is happy in the thought that this is he. Pierre passes around the hat, still enthralled and unseeing. Alva lays her hand on his and whispers, "PIERRE!"

He is frightened at first. Can scarcely believe it is she. Then breaks the real smile that wipes away five years' bitterness from his soul. She has risen. They read the truth in each other's eyes and then by a common impulse are in each other's arms.

Then follows their Wonderful Hour that will make all the suffering in the world endurable, that will keep his heart forever green and his smile sweet for all the days to come. She orders wine and the waiter looks on skeptically.

They then review his night of triumph long ago. Pierre mimics La Touche and how amusing he was. Alva acts the applause and the shyness of Pierre. They laugh and weep alternately and forget all things. Pierre takes Alva's hands and kisses them: "AND ALL THE YEARS THOU HAST BEEN MY INVISIBLE STAR TO WHOM I HAVE PLAYED AND SUNG AND SMILED!" She takes his brow and pushes back the hair and kisses him. Oh, the joy of telling each other their great love!

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

Back at the hotel the hours have passed petulantly for Blake. He has tickets for the midnight express. Worried and annoyed he at length gets the police and insists on going with them and making a search of the Lower City.

Gabriele at home is distracted with anxiety.

But for Pierre and Alva there are neither time nor things, all is eternal love. Pierre is saying: "AH, MY ANGEL! THIS NIGHT SHALL BE MY ETERNITY, COLORING ALL TIME THAT HAS BEEN OR SHALL BE!" They drink deeply to their love.

Then it is that in a hopeless digression the police come to this joint and find them. Blake is horrified, outraged.

Pierre for a moment is roused to horror at the sight of the police, but it is Alva who in a look gives him strength and he is resolute to stand the supposed ordeal. Alva remarks: "I DID NOT TELL YOU—BUT WHAT DOES IT MATTER TO US!—HE IS NOW MY HUSBAND!" Pierre smiles that nothing can dim his happiness. Blake in his rage at Pierre, who does not move when he shakes his fist under his nose, tumbles over in exhaustion, plainly showing that he is not good for many more years. They revive him with whisky. Pierre's smile seems chiseled in his heart as she says: "AU REVOIR, MY PIERRE-LE-GRAND! UNTIL SOME DAY—YOU UNDERSTAND, MY LOVE—AU REVOIR!"

Pierre stands with clasped hands as though he saw a vision, and then marches away like one inspired, saying to himself: "YOU, MY LOVE, AND TONIGHT, CAN NEVER LEAVE ME!" He takes the tearful Gabriele in his arms and together

AN ACCEPTED SYNOPSIS

they watch the lights of an express train passing by: "TONIGHT! TONIGHT, MA PETITE, MY FAIREST DREAM CAME TRUE! YES, AND TOMORROW—TOMORROW—PERHAPS—" And we know that She will return tomorrow—one day—and all that he has Dreamed will live!

THE END OF THE PLAY.

*The Scenario Is the Translation of the Author's Story-Synopsis into a Scene Arrangement of the Photoplay in Continuity.*

## CHAPTER XXIII

### SCENARIOS THAT HAVE BEEN DONE

"ONE OF US"; "JUST A SONG AT TWILIGHT"; "BONNIE ANNIE LAURIE"; "THE RED REPUBLIC."

**A**N examination of the excerpts here given will disclose that there are many forms employed in obtaining the same results. The suggestion offered in another chapter is here repeated, that progress, inter-understanding, and more perfect interpretation and presentation, would result, if a standard and universal form, terminology, and production were evolved, *studied*, and adopted by all concerned in the creation, construction, interpretation, production, manufacture, and presentation of Photodrama.

The following Scenario was patterned in the main from models used in the Lasky studio from the original stage Play of the same name. The Photoplay was produced by that corporation under another title, and from a script that quite abandoned the story and argument of the Play.

## SPECIMEN SCENARIOS

(EXAMPLE 133.)

1. Main Title:

ONE OF US

BY JACK LAIT

SCENARIO

BY HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

2. Producer's Titles:

3. Subtitle:

All humanity is made of the same clay, and after all it is usually a mere circumstance that separates one half of society from the other.

Scene 1.

*Int. Potter's Workshop—MIDDLE VIEW—IRIS IN*

A kindly old Potter sits at his moulding bench. On one side of the bench stands the statuette of a cabaret singer he has just finished. From the same clay, the Potter is just putting the finishing touches to a magnificent dame of high society. Pleased with his handiwork, the Potter sets the second figure down near the first and turns aside, taking up another handful of soft clay to make a third figure. A Satyr-like Man with a devilish mischief in his eyes comes stealthily behind the Potter, advising the audience with a wink to look sharp and watch the fun. With a piece of white crayon the Satyr draws a distinct line between the two statuettes. Instantly they come to life.

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

### Scene 2.

#### *Int. Potter's Workshop—CLOSE VIEW*

of Two Statuettes who have become Joan and Isabel. The swell Lady, Isabel, surveys the Cabaret Singer, Joan, disapprovingly through her lorgnettes, draws up her skirt and walks away. Joan gives a toss of her head, draws herself up scornfully, and reveals her opinion of the Lady with a contemptuous snap of the fingers.

4. Subtitle:

#### WALLACE REID

as David Strong—whose Money was the "circumstance" which made him a scion of a society that bored him to death.

### Scene 3.

#### *Int. Strong Dining Room—CLOSE VIEW*

of Dave in evening dress sitting in massive stiff chair, stifling a yawn and otherwise suffering excruciating agony and discomfort.

### Scene 4.

#### *Int. Strong Dining Room—IRIS IN—FULL VIEW*

Dinner party of the most boringly exquisite kind, without caricature. Present are Dave and Isabel; Tony, Elderly Maiden, Elsie, Roswell; fussy Old Uncle and Aunt, aristocratic Middle-aged Gentleman and Dave's Mother—in that order, so that Mother is alongside of Dave. Mr. Roswell rises with exquisite stupidity in response to a toast.

5. Subtitle:

And malicious "circumstance" is about to thrust this on Dave as a brother-in-law.

## SPECIMEN SCENARIOS

### Scene 5.

*Int. Strong Dining Room—CLOSE VIEW*

of Roswell, who is of the saphead, boring English type and in the most tedious manner possible tries to express himself.

### Scene 6.

*Int. Strong Dining Room—FULL VIEW*

All the diners, with the exception of Dave and Tony, who manifest greatest agony, are enthralled. Dave signals to Tony, for heaven's sake to try to get out of this.

#### 6. Subtitle:

While lack of this same Money has made Tony Watson an under-world newspaper reporter.

### Scene 7.

*Int. Strong Dining Room—CLOSE VIEW*

of Tony, equally bored is answering Dave's code in the affirmative that he too will die.

#### 7. Subtitle:

Isabel, who is in conspiracy with "circumstance" to become a member of Dave's family.

### Scene 8.

*Int. Strong Dining Room—FULL VIEW*

Dave at a warning signal from Tony finds himself observed by Isabel and makes an awkward and unsatisfactory attempt to explain, in the midst of which Elsie and Roswell have risen together and the company follows suit to drink their health. Dave manages to spill his wine, which is a true record of the way he feels about it.

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

### Scene 10.

#### *Int. Foyer Hall—FULL VIEW*

Showing dining room through doorway, with diners standing around holding elegant conversation. Tony stands wiping his brow as though he had escaped from torture, when Dave comes running in registering it was awful and imploring Tony to get him out of it. Tony assures him.

#### 8. Subtitle:

“Oh, I’ve the sort of assignment tonight that you love—but how the deuce will you break away?”

### Scene 11.

#### *Int Foyer Hall—CLOSE VIEW*

of Dave and Tony. Dave falls on Tony’s neck and indicates that he is just to leave it to him. He pushes Tony back into the dining room. Dave goes to a little desk and takes up a telegram blank. Butler is passing through when Dave seals the telegram, hands it to butler, looks at his watch telling butler to deliver it to him in five minutes. Butler amazed, but politely comprehends. Dave exits.

### Scene 12.

#### *Int. Strong Library—FULL VIEW*

The dinner guests are taking their coffee. The gentlemen are standing about in possible postures of discomfort and the ladies are talking vague nothings. Dave’s Mother—who obviously idolizes her son—has got Dave by the arm and is piloting him over to Isabel, when the butler comes and presents Dave with the telegram on a salver.



## SPECIMEN SCENARIOS

### Scene 13.

*Int. Strong Library—MIDDLE VIEW*

Taking in Dave, Mother, and Isabel. Comedy business of Dave, as he hesitates gravely before opening telegram. Anxiety of mother at possibility of unfortunate contents which Dave has suggested. Isabel as usual is suspicious and keeps an eye of mistrust on Dave. Dave reads the telegram and registers dismay. As his Mother is going to read it he crumples it up in his hand.

### Scene 14.

*Int. Strong Library—FULL VIEW*

The commotion caused by the telegram has penetrated the stilted atmosphere of the entire assemblage. Tony is particularly affected and moves to Dave's side, taking the crumpled telegram from his hand. He seems to feel it more than Dave and remarks loudly:

9. Subtitle:

"Why, isn't this distressing, Dave! You will have to go at once?"

### Scene 15.

*Int. Strong Library—FULL VIEW*

Dave nods soberly. Dave's Mother is quite wrought up and accompanies him to the door as he bids the guests an unceremonious good evening! He looks at his watch and tells his mother not to worry, it is nothing. He kisses her and hurries out.

### Scene. 16.

*Int. Strong Library—CLOSE VIEW*

of Isabel, who has been deserted. She spies the

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

crumpled telegram lying on the floor. Dave in his haste has dropped it. She picks it up, unfolds it on her fan and reads:

### Scene 17.

*Int. Strong Library—INSERT*

Telegram outspread on fan with two hands holding it. It is blank.

### Scene 18.

*Int. Strong Library—MIDDLE VIEW*

Isabel in her cold, almost cruel, rumination over this is interrupted by the return of Dave's Mother.

### Scene 19.

*Dave's Bedroom—FULL VIEW*

Dave like a wild Indian is peeling off his evening togs.

### Scene 20.

*Int. Strong Parlor—FULL VIEW*

One of the guests has just finished a solo on the piano, when Tony looks at his watch and then hurries to Mother, saying he must go.

### Scene 21.

*Int. Strong Parlor—MIDDLE VIEW*

Tony telling Mother:

10. Spoken Title:

"I've got to do a little slumming to-night for my paper."

Isabel in particular seems intensely interested. The others crowd around and Tony is obliged to tell

## SPECIMEN SCENARIOS

them all something about the underworld. Isabel pipes up with feigned girlish enthusiasm:

11. Spoken title:

"Why don't you take us down there with you—it would be so interesting and amusing!"

Immediately this is echoed by the young people. Tony is uncomfortable now, hesitates, then tells them he will see. Goes to phone on table and talks.

### Scene 22.

#### *Bar Room at Harry's—MIDDLE VIEW*

Harry answering phone, surrounded by typical habits, who for a moment look as though the place had been pinched. Then he recognizes Tony's voice and signals to the bunch that it is all right. Replies cordially affirmative, hangs up receiver, turns full of business on those about:

12. Spoken title:

"There's a bunch o' swell suckers comin' down—make 'em think they're seein' hell with the lid off!"

At which point in the Scenario we arrive where the stage play began—in Harry's Bar Room a few minutes before the arrival of the "swell suckers." The foregoing twenty-two scenes were required to establish the coincidences that come thick and fast in the story that follows. We have tried to bring out the characters and their relationships. We de-

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

sired particularly to reveal Dave's attitude toward the society he was born in. We must establish reasons for his wanting to get out and do something exciting. We put them all in the pepper-pot of contrast and they are self-wound with motivation. We can readily conjecture what each character introduced will do under a given extraordinary situation.

The following Photoplay was produced under the same title, with Pedro de Cordoba and Evelyn Greeley in the leading parts.

(EXAMPLE 134.)

CAPTION 1.

JUST A SONG AT TWILIGHT

CAPTION 2.

BY HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

CAPTION 3.

PART I.

"LO, TO THEIR HEARTS LOVE  
SANG AN OLD SWEET SONG—"

Scene 1. *Corner of luxurious Living Room*

Lucy Winter and her Wealthy Suitor are just parting. He folds her in his arms and she turns her head away, showing that she is accepting his attentions for other reasons than love. He hurries from the room with a self-satisfaction that does not see through her distress. When he has gone Lucy looks at the big solitaire and shudders.

## SPECIMEN SCENARIOS

### Scene 2. *Library*

Stephen Winter sits drumming nervously with one hand on the library table waiting for Suitor to exit. Winter springs up as he enters and asks him all about it. Suitor with continued self-satisfaction tells Winter, Of course, she accepted him! The two go out arm in arm, smiling happily. Winter seems greatly relieved.

### Scene 3. Same as 1. *Living Room*

Lucy has burst into tears and sits wiping her eyes and looking sadly out of the window sobbing.

### Scene 4. *Hallway of Mansion*

Suitor is passing out of front door, which Winter holds open. He closes door and breathes a deep sigh of relief as though what he has long wished for has come to pass. He pauses in mid-career as Lucy's sobs assail his ear. With genuine anxiety and a crumbling of his happiness he hurries to Living Room.

### Scene 5. Same as 1. *Living Room*

Winter enters in pained amazement. He tries to soothe Lucy in vain. He looks at the ring and asks if she does not want the Suitor. Shakes her head, No. Winter is distressed. Says he will get her everything money can buy, at which she retorts:

### CAPTION 4.

"OH, I WANT THE THINGS MONEY  
CAN'T BUY—TRUE LOVE, ROMANCE,  
AND HAPPINESS!"

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

Note.—Thus in five scenes we establish the characters of father and daughter and strike the keynote of the story. In Part II of this Photoplay—Example 135—We introduce a novelty by going behind the present action for thirty years.

(EXAMPLE 135.)

CAPTION 23

PART II.

“SOFTLY WOVE ITSELF INTO HIS  
DREAM.”

CAPTION 24.

“FATHER TIME LEADS BACK THE  
CONSCIENCE OF WINTER TO RE-  
VIEW HIS LIFE.”

Scene 46. *Village Street*—not far from the Man-  
sion

A ragged urchin (Winter as a boy) going aimlessly along the road with his dog, a switch in his hand. Suddenly, for little apparent reason, after having stubbed his toe, he begins chasing the dog, beating it with the stick as though the animal had been responsible.

Scene 47. Same as 1. *Living Room*

Conventional figure of Father Time enters and walks to Winter, who is still sleeping. *The posture of the sleeping man never changes.* Father Time taps Winter on the shoulder three distinct times.  
IRIS IN

## SPECIMEN SCENARIOS

The Spirit of Winter slowly rises to a sitting posture and looks up at Time in awe. Time beckons and the spirit of Winter follows him out of the room.

Note.—And so the three middle Parts are the Spirit of Winter in his dream reviewing his past life. The audience sees this life unfolded. In Part V he awakens and we return to the period of present time as depicted in Part I.

---

“Bonnie Annie Laurie” (Example 136) was produced under the same title with June Caprice in the title role. This story was suggested by the song, but is in no wise a paraphrase of it. It came about through the producer’s crying need for a costume play for a storyless star.

(EXAMPLE 136.)

CAPTION (Title):

BONNIE ANNIE LAURIE

CAPTION 2.

BY HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

BUSINESS:

We open with a double page of music *with the words* of the song “Annie Laurie.”

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

### CLOSE VIEW.....

1.

(So that the audience may read music and words and hold until time is given to play part of air by orchestra.)

“Maxwelton Braes are bonnie,  
Where early fa’s the dew;  
And it’s there that Annie Laurie  
Gi’ed me her promise true—  
Gi’ed me her promise true,  
Which ne’er forgot will be,  
And for bonnie Annie Laurie,  
I’d lay me doon and dee.”

(Double expose into—)

### CLOSE VIEW.....

2.

Face of Annie Laurie enframed by the pages. Annie’s face may express the emotional line of the entire story by opening with a brilliant smile, broadening to a laugh, then winsome, then tragedy, love, then back to the happy smile—*all done in a brief flash.*

(Fade music into—)

### CLOSE VIEW.....

3.

Annie’s face alone. She turns her head listening. (Open diaphragm until we see—) Annie standing knee deep in flowers on a flower-covered slope. She holds a half-picked bouquet of daisies which she waves spiritedly to—



## SPECIMEN SCENARIOS

### CLOSE VIEW.....

4.  
Donald singing, with all his heart and soul in the expression although he sees nothing of her.

### CAPTION (Insert).....

3.  
"And it's there that Annie Laurie,  
Gi'ed me her promise true—"

### FULL VIEW.....

5.  
Annie making a cup of her hands and calling mischievously, then ducking down and hiding among the flowers.

### FULL VIEW.....

6.  
Donald stops in the middle of a line and his face is wreathed in smiles at the sound of Annie's voice. He is perplexed that he cannot see her anywhere. Annie's head and laughing face is seen lifting above the flowers. Donald goes dashing across the field toward her.

### FULL VIEW.....

7.  
Donald catches up with Annie and she turns a smiling breathless face to him. Donald turns serious.

### CAPTION.....

4.  
"Come now, Annie Laurie, the song on my lips was but an echo of the song in my heart—gie me your promise true!"

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

Note—Setting, atmosphere and key were essentials in the very beginning of this play.

In conclusion we present the opening scenes of "The Gay Old Dog," from the original scenario by Mrs. Sidney Drew of Edna Ferber's story. This Photoplay stands on record as one of the finest examples of Photodrama, much of which is due to Mrs. Drew's artistry as a scenarioist.

(EXAMPLE 137.)

(1)

HOBART HENLEY  
Presents  
MRS. SIDNEY DREW'S  
adaptation of  
*"THE GAY OLD DOG"*  
by  
EDNA FERBER

(2)

Direction of  
HOBART HENLEY

(3)

The "Gay Old Dog"  
MR. JOHN CUMBERLAND

(4)

THE GAY-DOG BUSINESS WAS A LATE PHASE IN THE LIFE OF JIMMY DODD. HE HAD BEEN QUITE A DIFFERENT SORT OF A CANINE.

## SPECIMEN SCENARIOS

### Scene 1.

Interior—beautiful cafe—fade in closeup—  
a middle-aged man—a plump lonely bachelor of 60  
years—establish the fact that the waiters know him,  
that the captains are his closest friends—show Jim-  
my Dodd trying to get away with the jaunty youth-  
fulness that every one of his fat-encased muscles  
rebels against.

(5)

IT WAS ONLY RECENTLY THAT  
WAITERS HAD FOUGHT OVER JIM-  
MY—ONLY RECENTLY THAT HE  
HAD ORDERED THINGS UNDER  
GLASS, OR MIXED HIS OWN SALAD  
DRESSING.

### Scene 3.

Interior—cafe

Waiter comes in with a large tray on which are  
all the ingredients that go into making a good salad  
dressing—much attention is being paid Jimmy. It  
may be a good thing to show two or three good  
types at nearby tables, who recognize him.

(6)

IN ORDER TO KNOW JIMMY DODD,  
ONE MUST GO BACK TWENTY-FIVE  
YEARS, WHEN HE WAS YOUNG AND  
HANDSOME AND TWENTY-SEVEN.

### Scene 3.

Dodd dining room

Fade in—show Jimmy at the head of the table,

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

young, smiling, a devoted brother of three sisters and a doting mother. This will no doubt be a closeup of Jimmy. He is engaged in the interesting act of eating supper. Looks up and smiles at—

### Scene 4.

Close up of Mrs. Dodd.

A dear old gummidging mother—she is a quaint character about whom there must be much sympathy.

(7)

A DUTIFUL, HARD WORKING SON (IN THE WHOLESALE HARNESS BUSINESS) OF A WIDOWED AND DOTING MOTHER, WHO CALLED HIM JAMES.

Close up of mother again as she smiles at Jimmy.

(8)

THERE WERE THREE UNWED AND SELFISH SISTERS. EVA, THE OLDEST, KEPT HOUSE EXPERTLY AND COMPLAININGLY.

### Scene 5.

Close up of Eva as she sits to the right of her mother.

(9)

CARRIE DODD TAUGHT SCHOOL—AND HATED IT.

### Scene 6.

Close up of Carrie eating dinner—a regular school-teacher look on her face.

SPECIMEN SCENARIOS

- (10) STELLA, THE YOUNGEST, WAS CALLED "BABE." HER PROFESSION WAS BEING THE FAMILY BEAUTY, AND IT TOOK ALL HER SPARE TIME.

Scene 7.

Close up of Stella.

She really isn't a beauty except in comparison with the other two sisters.

- (11) THIS WAS JIMMY'S HOUSEHOLD—HE WAS THE NOMINAL HEAD OF IT, BUT IT WAS AN EMPTY TITLE. THE FOUR WOMEN DOMINATED HIS LIFE!

Scene 8.

Dodd dining room—

Long shot of the family as they rise from the table and exit toward the living room.

Scene 9.

Dodd living room—

Show the four entering and seating themselves in easy chairs—Mrs. Dodd with her knitting—the girls with their sewing, etc.—Jimmie falls into the old arm chair in the corner or in front of the old-fashioned fireplace.

Scene 10.

Close up of Jimmie as he sits in the chair—the evening paper before him.

## THE FEATURE PHOTOPLAY

(12)

THERE WERE MANY THINGS ABOUT THE SLOW-GOING MASCULINE MEMBER OF THE DODD FAMILY THAT THEY NEVER SUSPECTED.

Scene 11.

Medium shot of the women, intent upon everyday topics that interest women.

Scene 12.

Close up of

Jimmie as he smokes—his face takes on a new and strange light as he smiles and looks into the future.

(13)

JIMMIE DODD WAS A DREAMER OF DREAMS.

Note—And so on—nearly two hours of sheer delight. In this photoplay something is done which it was prophesied never could be done by the movies—and it is true the “movies” never could do it. Here is a slow-moving, incisive, excruciating *study* of characters. The kind of study that fiction excels in and Drama revels in—done as well as either of them could do it by the silent Photodrama! “The Gay Old Dog” should be used as a model for study by directors. Here is a page from life with real people rousing our emotional concern as though they were our own flesh and blood!

---

Photodrama is not a hit-or-miss means of filling an idle hour. It is one of the Arts—

## SPECIMEN SCENARIOS

which are just as essential for man's rounded life as meat and drink—that should offer him the intimate companionship of Beauty, the strong hand of Courage through the experience of fellowman, the lesson of Righteousness as its own reward, the desire for the comradeship of clean and noble Characters, the tonic to their imagination in draining fine Deeds and the joyous Goodness that lies in a healthy Entertainment after the moil and toil of the day's work!

THE END.





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