



Book & Lyrics by  
LEVRES DE SANG

Music & Additional Lyrics by  
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- \* Paul Richard Scott is writing as Levres de Sang
- \* Randy Williams is composing / writing as Leb Williams

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## C A S T

### Principals

#### **BERNHARD KAUN**

Milwaukee-born, German composer.

#### **CARL LAEMMLE, JR.**

Head of Universal Pictures between 1929 and 1936.

#### **MARIANNE MELROSE**

Scriptreader and actress from Sun River, Montana.

#### **DOCTOR LIME**

Chicago-born, African-American studio physician.

### Supporting

ELIOT BELVEDERE: Theater Manager.

UNCLE CARL: Affectionate name for Laemmle's father.

PROFESSOR GÖRLITZ: German surgeon / theoretician.

NEWSGIRL / X27: An American Mata Hari.

CHESTER MONTGOMERY III: MGM executive.

ESTHER-JEAN CARRINGTON: Fading star of silent era.

DROWNED GIRL: Childhood memory of Bernhard.

HERR. X: Subject of Görlitz's book.

HEDDA HOPPER: Renowned Hollywood gossip columnist.

HUGO WILHELM KAUN: Bernhard's father.

### Additional

BROADWAY & HOLLYWOOD TYPES, MOVIE & PARTYGOERS, ACCOUNTANTS,  
NIGHTCLUB PATRONS, SAILORS, SECRETARIES and various other roles  
to be played / doubled by the company.

## LIST OF SONGS

### Act 1:

1. THE FIFTH CHILD ..... Bernhard
2. IMAGINATION (LET IT RUN WILD) ..... Laemmle & Bernhard
3. NEW YORK MOVIES ..... Marianne & Cast
4. CREATE A LIFE ..... Lime w/ Newsgirl
5. MONSTERS & MARGINS ..... Laemmle w/ Accountants
6. THE GIRL FROM SUN RIVER ..... Bernhard & Marianne
7. GIVE IT MORE TRUMPET ..... Laemmle & Bernhard
8. LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER ..... Görlitz & Lime
9. POSTCARD FROM UNION PACIFIC ..... Lime
10. BLACK MOON ..... Lime w/ X27
11. THIS COULD BE MY CITY ..... Marianne w/ Ms. Carrington
12. (COUNTERPOINT TO) COYOTES ..... Bernhard

### Act 2:

1. SINCE YOU CAME MY WAY ..... Marianne & Chester (w/ Cast)
2. NOBODY MUST KNOW ..... Görlitz & X27
3. ABOVE SCHUMANNSTRASSE ..... Lime w/ Herr. X
4. THE MAN WITH A THOUSAND FACES ..... Laemmle
5. LITTLE MARIA ..... Bernhard
6. LOVE IN THE BLACK FOREST ..... Marianne & Bernhard
7. IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY ..... Marianne
8. DIAS DORADOS ..... Laemmle (w/ Hedda & Executives)
9. SOMEWHERE IN YOUR ART ..... Bernhard

**Premise:**

A former Hollywood composer prepares to give a talk at a fortieth anniversary double-screening of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, but is distracted by a youthful studio mogul, an old flame, and a now deceased physician.

**Time & Place:**

Scenes alternate between our 1971 Los Angeles present and the 1930s to 1960s past in Hollywood, Hamburg and Buenos Aires.

**Disclaimer:**

The portrayals herein of Bernhard Kaun, Carl Laemmle, Jr., Carl Laemmle Senior and Hedda Hopper are fictional representations of their real-life selves. All other characters, including those of Marianne Melrose and Doctor Lime, are entirely fictitious. Any similarities to persons previously employed by Universal Pictures are purely coincidental.

**Note:**

"Laemmle" should be pronounced LEM-LEE.

**OVERTURE:** *Comprising various themes from the show.*

**Act 1, Scene 1**

*Backroom of movie theater.  
Somewhere in Los Angeles. November 1971.*

*Curtain rises on a wood-panelled function room lined with Hollywood portraits. Everyone from Garbo and Barrymore to Brando and Hoffman. There's also a desk, chair and drinks cabinet. The room's silver-haired occupant, BERNHARD KAUN, cuts a distinguished figure with his tweed overcoat and tan leather gloves. He holds a 5x4 invitation as he addresses the audience from downstage.*

**BERNHARD:** If you told me I'd be back in the movie world... Well, I don't even recall the last time I saw one on television. Let alone coming here -- Oh, I might conduct at a festival in Boston or New York on occasion, but I've not been to L.A. since before the war. And how long must it be since—?

*Bernhard checks his watch.*

**BERNHARD:** It's not like Mr. Laemmle to be late—

*The theater manager, ELIOT BELVEDERE, enters. A preppy East Coast type sporting a yellow V-neck and checkered slacks.*

**BELVEDERE:** Hey, we got quite the crowd in tonight. They're showing *Easy Rider* with *Vanishing Point* at the Rialto across the street so I didn't think we'd sell this many tickets—  
(*realizing*)  
Wait, you're not Mr. Laemmle?

**BERNHARD:** We spoke on the telephone—

*He hands Belvedere the invitation.*

**BERNHARD:** My name is Bernhard Kaun. I scored the picture.

**BELVEDERE:** Hey, you sound just like Orson Welles.  
(*impersonating*)  
My name is Orson Welles. I wrote and directed this picture—

**BERNHARD:** I can assure you I'm not Orson Welles. I'm—

**Music #1: THE FIFTH CHILD**

BERNHARD: I'M THE FIFTH CHILD OF HUGO WILHELM  
 PATRIARCH WITH GREAT EXPECTATION  
 DOMICILED TO A STUDIOUS REALM  
 DRY AS DUST WITHOUT OSTENTATION  
 -- BERLIN, LUGANO, VIOLIN, PIANO  
 CLARINET WITH MILITARY INCLINATION  
 ALL AT SUCH A TENDER, TENDER AGE  
 WHEN OUR KAISER RULED AND OOMPAH WAS ALL THE RAGE.

I'M THE FIFTH CHILD OF LA CRÈME DE LA CREAM  
 MADE MY WAY VIA GERMANIC CONNECTION  
 I WENT WILD FOR YOUR AMERICAN DREAM  
 TRIED AS I MUST WITHOUT EXPECTATION  
 -- NEW YORK, ASSISTANT, ARRANGER  
 MILLS, RCA, NIBELUNGEN ORCHESTRATION  
 ALL AT SUCH AN IMPRESSIONABLE AGE  
 WHEN THE CHARLESTON RULED AND CHAPLIN WAS ALL THE  
 RAGE.

MY FATHER NEVER LIKED THE MOVIES  
 I KNOW IT SOUNDS ABRUPT  
 DEBAUCHERY WAS AMONG THE FACTORS  
 AND HE'D DESPISE YOUR METHOD ACTORS.  
 MY FATHER NEVER LIKED THE MOVIES  
 HE SAID: "HOLLYWOOD'S BANKRUPT  
 -- TEACH THEORY IN FREIBERG OR BADEN  
 LAEMMLE'S MONSTERS WILL ONLY CORRUPT".

I'M THE FIFTH CHILD OF HUGO WILHELM  
 MIDDLE CLASS WITH ROMANTIC AFFECTATION  
 A MIRACLE OF OUR POSTWAR REALM  
 EAST AND WEST, DENAZIFICATION  
 -- BERLIN, LUGANO, VIOLIN, PIANO  
 CONCERT TOURS FOR GENEROUS REMUNERATION  
 ALL IN THIS PERMISSIVE, LONG-HAIRED AGE  
 WHILE THE DEUTSCHE-MARK RULES AND HIJACKS ARE ALL  
 THE RAGE.

BELVEDERE: Okay, okay. I remember.

BERNHARD: Any sign of Mr. Laemmle?

*An ASSISTANT enters. She wears spectacles and a miniskirt.*

ASSISTANT: Oh, Mr. Belvedere, I've been looking for you  
 all over. I had a message from Mr. Laemmle's  
 secretary. He won't be coming -- Suspected  
 food poisoning.

BELVEDERE: Please tell me you're joking around. You are joking aren't you, Dorian?  
*(turns to Bernhard)*  
 Kid likes to spook me. No doubt made a bet with her smart-aleck friends that I'd have a coronary before Hanukkah.

ASSISTANT: I'm sorry... Seems this Laemmle took an early dinner, but hadn't figured on the poached Honduran salmon. Something about the off season—

BELVEDERE: Poached Honduran salmon! Jeez, why are we discussing the mating habits of Central American marine life when I got a packed house who all paid five dollars a ticket anticipating old-school charm and sophistication -- Christ, I really am having a coronary.

ASSISTANT: I've got to go, Mr. Belvedere. I said I'd help Lori out. There's only twenty minutes before intermission.

*She exits.*

BELVEDERE: Wait a minute... Wait a minute -- I got the guy who scored the picture.

BERNHARD: Oh no, Mr. Belvedere. I'm on board with your original plan -- and that was accompanying Mr. Laemmle on stage; you introducing us and me saying "Thank you, Eliot. It's a pleasure to be here tonight..."; but it was absolutely Mr. Laemmle doing the talk -- You can't expect me to step in at a moment's notice. Besides, they won't know who I am—

BELVEDERE: I wouldn't call it a talk. Just tell them what it was like working with the boogeyman.  
*(off Bernhard's bemusement)*  
 It's what they called Karloff back in the day.

BERNHARD: That as it may, I never saw him. I was tied to the recording suite. Oh, aside from one time in the canteen -- He was bemoaning the absence of mint sauce.

BELVEDERE: But you knew Junior.

BERNHARD: After a fashion—

BELVEDERE: Terrific! So this is how we'll work things: After the intermission, I'll introduce you by saying "Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm afraid our scheduled speaker, former Head of Universal Pictures, Carl Laemmle Jr., has been taken ill and can't be with us, but I'm delighted that Bernhard Kaun has agreed to say a few words in his place -- Among many other things, Mr. Kaun was an orchestrator, composer and musical director in Hollywood between 1931 and 1942 -- and beside his contributions to over two hundred films, including *King Kong* and *Gone With the Wind*, he composed incidental music for the picture you're about to see -- Please, give a warm welcome to—"  
(*then*)  
You get the idea.

BERNHARD: Seems you know something about my career, after all -- You must be one of these hotshot film school kids I heard about.

BELVEDERE: You need a full beard to hang with those guys. I just annoy librarians -- Anyhow, all you gotta do is say what it was like working in pictures back then.

BERNHARD: But—

BELVEDERE: Appreciate this, Mr. Kaun, but I should be in the projection room. The old timer's prone to dozing off during the final reel.  
(*indicating drinks cabinet*)  
Feel free to fix yourself something.

*Belvedere exits. Bernhard turns to the audience.*

BERNHARD: What can I tell them...?

*CARL LAEMMLE JR.'s youthful self enters. Brim full of ginger in a double-breasted suit complete with white carnation.*

LAEMMLE: (*Taking seat at desk*) Tell them how Uncle Carl made me head of the studio on my twenty-first birthday—

*UNCLE CARL enters. He's similarly attired and full of sparkle.*

UNCLE CARL: (*To audience*) Sure makes a swell story -- Although he can leave off how I went and lost it for him later on.



*Uncle Carl removes a document from inside his jacket and sets it on the desk in front of Junior.*

UNCLE CARL: Sign here. Here... And here.

LAEMMLE: You know what they'll say, Uncle Carl -- They'll say it's nepotism.

UNCLE CARL: Of course they will, Junior. Because they don't know anything about running a movie studio. They weren't born into the business -- Neither did they spend the last fifteen years dissecting every last nut and rivet of that business.

LAEMMLE: Sure means a lot to me -- I won't let you you down, Sir.

UNCLE CARL: I know you won't, Junior.

*Laemmle signs the document. Turns to Bernhard.*

LAEMMLE: That's Uncle Carl all over. The last of the benevolent showmen.  
(pause)  
Be sure you tell 'em that.

UNCLE CARL: That means a lot to me, Junior.

LAEMMLE: It's true, Sir. If it wasn't for you... I mean, you built the backlots and bungalows—

UNCLE CARL: That's right. I even planted palm trees—

LAEMMLE: Swaying all soft and nice in the breeze.

UNCLE CARL: I thought of Universal City as a refuge—

LAEMMLE: For the guy who got kicked out by his wife—

UNCLE CARL: For the shopgirl who only a moment ago thought about throwing herself off the Brooklyn Bridge.

LAEMMLE: We gave them our souls!

UNCLE CARL: And you, Junior, gave them—

*Laemmle stands. Crosses to center stage.*

**Music #2: IMAGINATION (LET IT RUN WILD)**

LAEMMLE: IMAGINATION  
 LET IT RUN WILD  
 FIND ITS WAY BY MOONLIGHT'S GLOW  
 BEGUILED.  
 IMAGINATION  
 OUR POOR STEPCHILD  
 CINDERELLA FROM THE WORLD  
 EXILED  
 IMAGINATION.

SHE'LL MOVE THROUGH YOUR ROOM AT NIGHT  
 WHEN YOU EMBRACE THE DARK  
 SO DON'T TURN HER AWAY  
 OR SWITCH ON THE LIGHT.  
 AND THEY'LL MOVE THROUGH YOUR DREAMS AT NIGHT  
 WHEN YOU IGNITE THAT SPARK  
 SO DON'T TURN THEM AWAY  
 PLAY WHATEVER FEELS RIGHT.

BERNHARD: I believe your father had his doubts. If I'm  
 not mistaken, he said—

DOCTORS AND THEIR DUNGEONS  
 THEY'RE TEN-A-PENNY, MAYBE MORE  
 CALIGARI, ORLAC, NOSFERATU  
 IT'S ALL BEEN DONE BEFORE  
 -- WEREWOLVES AT THE WINDOW  
 THAT TWO-BIT TICKET'S OH SO CHEAP  
 GHOULS, GHOSTS AND GOLEMS  
 THE DEAD PREFER TO SLEEP.

LAEMMLE: IF THERE'S ONE THING TO TAKE AWAY FROM MOVIES  
 LET IT BE, BERNHARD, THIS SIMPLE DRILL  
 WHAT YOU SUFFER FROM IS NOT A LACK OF IT, MAN  
 BUT KNOWING WHAT YOU NEED (JUST LISTEN TO ME)  
 ... TO THRILL.

IMAGINATION  
 LET IT RUN WILD

BERNHARD: I still say the picture needed more music.

LAEMMLE: THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE VILLAGERS  
 THE BAYING OF THE DOGS  
 THE SNAP AND CRACKLE POP  
 OF BLAZING LOGS  
 -- LOOK, THEY'VE SET THE WINDMILL ON FIRE  
 I'M SPENT AND IN A SWEAT  
 WHO NEEDS A SOUNDTRACK, BERNHARD  
 WHAT PART OF IT DON'T YOU GET?

IMAGINATION  
LET IT RUN WILD  
FIND ITS WAY...

UNCLE CARL                    DOCTORS AND THEIR DUNGEONS  
& BERNHARD:                THEY'RE TEN-A-PENNY, MAYBE MORE.

LAEMMLE:                    ... BY MOONLIGHT'S GLOW  
                                  BEGUILED.  
                                  IMAGINATION  
                                  OUR POOR STEPCHILD  
                                  CINDERELLA FROM THE WORLD  
                                  EXILED.

LAEMMLE:                    IMAGINATION...

UNCLE CARL                    IMAGINATION.  
& BERNHARD:

UNCLE CARL:                I'll leave the monsters in your capable  
                                  hands, Junior.

*Uncle Carl exits.*

LAEMMLE:                    You see, it's like Uncle Carl said -- A swell  
                                  story.

BERNHARD:                    ... but the folks who showed up tonight know  
                                  that story already. They're a sophisticated  
                                  crowd -- I imagine they'd like to hear about  
                                  the backroom players: those folks you  
                                  wouldn't know were there but without whom  
                                  you wouldn't have a movie -- The best boys  
                                  and continuity girls; the lighting operators  
                                  and set designers; the scriptreaders who  
                                  filter out all that unreadable junk; or the  
                                  physicians who ensure everyone on the lot is  
                                  sound of mind and body.  
                                  (*suddenly*)  
                                  That's it! Marianne Melrose and Doctor Lime!

LAEMMLE:                    Marianne Melrose and Doctor Lime? Who...?  
                                  What did those two have to do with any of  
                                  our pictures?

BERNHARD:                    They represent everything I'm talking about.  
                                  (*then*)  
                                  Say, they both came onto the lot around the  
                                  same time as myself -- February 1931, if I'm  
                                  not mistaken.

LAEMMLE: Lemme get this straight: they got a packed house for this fortieth anniversary double screening: Right now they're showing *Dracula* and then they'll run *Frankenstein* after you've done your talk. And you're gonna tell 'em about some backroom physician and a scriptreader who had zip to do with either of those pictures -- Oh, wait, that Marianne dame did coverage on Fort and Faragoh's script before she made a splash for about five minutes over at Metro; but who the hell remembers her now? Who remembers her now...?

*Lights dim before coming up on...*

**Act 1, Scene 2**

*Audition Room.  
Somewhere off Broadway. January 1931.*

*A clipboard-wielding PRODUCER done up in a silk cravat and Princeton blazer stands beside a world-weary DIRECTOR watching MARIANNE MELROSE do her thing. She wears a white suit with matching top hat. There's a battered suitcase at STAGE LEFT.*

MARIANNE: (Semi-spoken)  
I'm down to my last quarter  
so if you think I oughtta  
hop a Westbound to the sticks  
you mistook me for that funny daughter  
who exchanged her brain for bricks.

*She winds up with a hokey flourish and winning smile. The two men are dumbstruck.*

PRODUCER: Kooky and kinda funny, but—

MARIANNE: Not what you had in mind, huh?

DIRECTOR: Kid's honest. I like that.

PRODUCER: Honesty's alright for Girl Scouts and divinity mistresses, but where did it ever get anyone on Broadway? Besides, I prefer college girls of a certain... How shall I put it?  
(pause)  
A certain elocution.

MARIANNE: I really am down to my last quarter and could use a break. Okay, I ain't got your fancy whatever, but I couldn't have been that bad?

PRODUCER: No, Miss...?  
(*checking list*)  
Miss. Melrose. No, you weren't bad. You were interminable -- And if this were a show about toothache, then I can assure you the leading role would be all yours.

DIRECTOR: Hey, you should try Berlin. I hear they go nuts for all that—

PRODUCER: Cubism and cabarets.

DIRECTOR: Seven-night Dada plays.

PRODUCER: Only she'll sail home Cargo Class and flat broke.

DIRECTOR: You ever thought about pictures? Hollywood and all that jazz.

MARIANNE: Now you just wanna put three thousand miles between me and this production.

PRODUCER: This gal really does have a sense of humor.

DIRECTOR: With guys like you around, she needs it. Seriously, if this were a comedy I'd bite.

PRODUCER: But you don't do comedy?

DIRECTOR: You won't let me!

MARIANNE: (*Makes to leave*) Okay fellas, I get it. Thanks all the same.

DIRECTOR: Hey, wait up. You think we're the heartless kind who spit girls like you back onto the street.

MARIANNE: (*Doing her best Bryn Mawr*) Well, you do, don't you?

PRODUCER: Mmm, I do. What's more, I can spot a phoney accent a mile off.

DIRECTOR: Come on, have a heart. She's got *something* going on. I dunno what it might be, but someone somewhere should know what to do with her.

**UNDERScore:** *Theme from THE GIRL FROM SUN RIVER (a number we'll hear later on in Act 1).*

DIRECTOR: See... Last night I woke up in a cold sweat thinking about all the dreams I'd shattered -- I mean, these kids only ever hear about the overnight sensations and rags to crazy riches success stories. They never read about Joan or Jean Nobody boarding that bus back to Ohio with their battered suitcase and empty bottle of peroxide.

**END UNDERScore.**

PRODUCER: *(Dabs a mock tear)* Well, we mustn't let it happen to this Joan or Jean Nobody.

DIRECTOR: That's the spirit!

*With perfect synchronicity the two of them lift Marianne from the ground and rush her across the stage as everything around her transforms into the hustle of Times Square.*

DIRECTOR: Look Marianne, what's the use in blinding yourself with all this no-good razzle dazzle? Our brains can only handle so much failure.

MARIANNE: What happens to them? I mean, to the folks whose brains absorb too much failure?

DIRECTOR: They wind up weaving wicker baskets!  
*(pause)*  
Take the girls on those billboards, for instance -- Their names all lit up like Christmas trees. Well, for starters, those ain't their real names—

PRODUCER: Neither's yours.

DIRECTOR: *(Shrugs)* Hey, I never said it was.

PRODUCER: Look, what he's trying to say—

**Music #3: NEW YORK MOVIES**

DIRECTOR: I HEAR THEY MADE A BLIZZARD  
OUT ON THE OTHER COAST  
WITH A '24 SNOW TRACTOR  
AND SOME DOOHICKEY EXTRACTOR

PRODUCER: YOU KNOW...  
THEY ALWAYS MAKE THE MOST—

MARIANNE: STARLIGHT IN THE SKY  
SHOWGIRLS ON THE STAGE  
WARLORDS IN SHANGHAI  
HEADLINES ON A FRONT PAGE.

DIRECTOR: Now you're catching on. Sometimes that last  
quarter is worth a million bucks—

PRODUCER: Wait, you forgot something!

*He hands Marianne the suitcase.*

PRODUCER & DIRECTOR: Good luck, kid!

*The two men exit. Marianne waves... As the stage fills with picturehouses and an atmosphere of euphoria and tickets for whatever you please. A neon banner declares: CARL LAEMMLE, JR. PRESENTS DRACULA.*

MARIANNE: I'M AT THE NEW YORK MOVIES  
THEY'RE PLAYING ALL THIS YEAR  
-- YES, THESE NEW YORK MOVIES  
MIGHT GET ME OUTTA HERE.

*Several BROADWAY GIRLS enter. Real theatre-school types. One of them wears a crushed beret.*

BROADWAY JUST ANOTHER GIRL ON BROADWAY  
GIRLS: THEY SAY SHE'S LIKE A GHOST  
LOST IN RADIO CITY  
YOU GOTTA FEEL SOME PITY.

*Marianne buys a ticket. Gets caught up with the BROADWAY GIRLS.*

BROADWAY WHEN SHE...  
GIRLS: ALWAYS FINDS THE MOST—  
STARDUST IN HER EYE  
CONFETTI IN HER HAIR  
GLITTER IN GOODBYE  
LOVE AT A COUNTY FAIR.

*On a lark, one of the Broadway girls swipes Marianne's top hat and exchanges it for the crushed beret.*

MARIANNE: I'M AT THE NEW YORK MOVIES  
THEY'RE PLAYING ALL THIS YEAR  
-- YES, THESE NEW YORK MOVIES  
MIGHT GET ME OUTTA HERE.

*Various MOVIEGOERS are suddenly illuminated by the beam of the projector as Marianne's suitcase bumps one of them on the head while she takes her seat. Marianne smiles "Sorry".*

MOVIEGOERS:               SHE'S AT THE NEW YORK MOVIES  
STARDUST IN HER EYE  
OUT ON THE OTHER COAST  
CONFETTI IN HER HAIR  
WITH A '24 SNOW TRACTOR etc.

*The movie theater becomes a dreary train carriage. An INSPECTOR enters and punches Marianne's ticket.*

TICKET INSPECTOR:    A THIRD-CLASS COMPARTMENT  
BROUGHT HER OUT WEST  
ACROSS WHEATFIELDS AND PRAIRIES  
WITH FIRE IN HER BREAST

*The carriage transforms into an equally dreary readers' office comprised of Marianne and THREE GIRLS (not unlike the Broadway Girls). A towering pile of scripts beside each of them. Laemmle paces the room and chomps on a cigar.*

*Suddenly, one of the girls raises her hand; the script she was reading held aloft. Laemmle motions for her to stand and she crosses the stage to hand him the script. Laemmle skims it before spitting out his cigar into the script and tossing the whole package in a nearby wastepaper basket. Another girl raises her hand...*

LAEMMLE:               WORKING THAT SLUSH PILE  
OFF STUDIO SEVEN  
SKIMMING FOR MONSTERS  
IN MY HOLLYWOOD HEAVEN

*Several PARTYGOERS enter. Marianne hesitates, but soon throws her unread scripts into the air and follows them out the door.*

PARTYGOERS:        YET SOON SHE'LL MAKE  
INFLUENTIAL FRIENDS ON SUNSET  
TALKING ABOUT SOME MOVIE THING  
AND ALL KINDSA DING-A-LING

MARIANNE:           YOU KNOW...  
I'LL ALWAYS FIND THE MOST—  
TEARDROPS IN MY EYE  
ORCHIDS AT MY DOOR  
VELVET FROM VERSAILLES  
THE WORLD UNLIKE BEFORE.

(CONT'D)



MARIANNE: I'M AT THE NEW YORK MOVIES  
THEY'RE PLAYING ALL THIS YEAR  
AND THESE NEW YORK MOVIES  
MIGHT GET ME OUTTA HERE.

CAST: SHE'S AT THE NEW YORK MOVIES  
THEY'RE PLAYING ALL THIS YEAR

MARIANNE: YES, THESE NEW YORK MOVIES  
MIGHT GET ME OUTTA HERE!

*Lights dim before coming up on...*

### Act 1, Scene 3

*Backroom of movie theater.  
Somewhere in Los Angeles. November 1971.*

*Laemmle sits at the desk. Absorbed in a mountain of paperwork.  
Bernhard tries to get his attention.*

BERNHARD: You see, Mr. Laemmle. Marianne's story—

*DOCTOR LIME enters. Although there's something 'off' about him.*

LIME: He's not listening, Bernhard. Mr. Laemmle's a  
busy man.

BERNHARD: Lime...? Doctor Lime. Is that really you?

LIME: It's terrific to see you again, Bernhard --  
You're in great shape. Concert tours agree  
with you. You could double for Von Karajan  
in *Life* magazine.

BERNHARD: Hotels, stuffy rehearsal rooms -- Damned  
unhealthy, to tell the truth.  
(*double-taking Lime*)  
This is a coincidence! I was just telling  
Mr. Laemmle how the folks out there—

*Laemmle gets up. Crosses the stage.*

LAEMMLE: Can't you see, Bernhard? He came to tell you  
he doesn't want his life story broadcast to  
every Jack and Jill. Let him rest in peace.  
(*to Lime*)  
Say, you got any of those antacid capsules?  
The ones with the candy stripes. This mafia  
script's playing hell with my digestion.

LIME: Sorry, Mr. Laemmle. But I no longer practise.

LAEMMLE: Yeah, I took a shot.

BERNHARD: Rest in peace. What—?

LIME: I'm afraid Mr. Laemmle's right. He always was perceptive.

BERNHARD: You mean—?

*A SECRETARY enters carrying a manila folder. She sashays across the stage and removes an official-looking document.*

SECRETARY: Certificate of Death issued by State of California. Male -- Lime, Otis Claybourn. Date of Death, April 26, 1961. Aged 64. Occupation: Physician. Primary cause of death: Nephritis of liver.

*The Secretary exits.*

LIME: Has it really been ten years? Seems only yesterday the folks at Evergreen were lowering my coffin into God's good earth. *(then)* Same day NASA launched their first manned spacecraft into the heavens.

BERNHARD: *(To Lime)* So why—?

LIME: I wanted to see old friends. *(then)* And because of that trip I made to Europe -- There were things I couldn't mention at the time, but I think they're about ready to be declassified.

BERNHARD: What kind of things?

LIME: *(whispers)* Federal secrets.

BERNHARD: You see, Mr. Laemmle! *(to audience)* I'll start by saying how when I came out to L.A. it was snowing for the first time since records began. *(pause)* Then I'll say something like "Maybe Lime brought the snow all the way from Chicago".

*Lights dim before coming up on...*

**Act 1, Scene 4**

*Newsstand outside movie theater.  
Chicago street. Dusk. February 1931.*

*A NEWSGIRL peddles movie magazines and theater listing guides. There's also a selection of glossy 10x8 publicity stills. While hung up behind her are a black trenchcoat and Homburg. Somewhere a child practices scales on a decrepit piano. A gaudy placard declares:*

*THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA  
Starring LON CHANEY ~ Man of a Thousand Faces*

NEWSGIRL: *Photoplay! Photoplay! Get your copy right here -- It's a real terrific edition. Yes, sirree... You got Mary Astor, David Manners, Loretta Young, Douglas Fairbanks, Norma Shearer, Dolores Del Rio and more fireworks than Chinatown on New Year.  
(pause)  
Read all about 'em right here!*

*Lime enters (younger, of course, and very much alive).*

NEWSGIRL: *Hey there, Doc! Don't you just think movies are a funny business -- Actors get this dandy idea they'd be better off being somebody else and spend half their lives waiting around to waltz down some staircase. No wonder they keep buying all those fancy houses and fancy cars they can hardly afford to run round the block.  
(then)  
I guess it pays well out there in Hollywoodland, but they're all gonna wind up needing shrinks. Whadda you say, Doc?*

**UNDERScore:** *Theme from IMAGINATION (LET IT RUN WILD).*

LIME: *(To audience) Imagine changing your appearance at will. Your identity, even...*

**END UNDERScore.**

NEWSGIRL: *Oh brother, you ain't listened to a word I said.*

LIME: *I'm sorry, Martha. It's the Lon Chaney effect -- I also found out they'll be tearing down the Home Insurance building. I'm gonna need a new office.*

NEWSGIRL: Sorry to hear that, doc.  
*(indicating newsstand)*  
 Although it's a dead cert this new office of yours will be one of those fancy ferroconcrete affairs with, you know, walls and windows, a reinforced roof and drinking water.

LIME: I should be grateful, huh -- What were you saying?

NEWSGIRL: I was running through my ten-dollar pitch for *Photoplay* magazine.

LIME: You know I always buy one regardless—

NEWSGIRL: Sure I do, but I gotta keep in practice. If I don't sell every last copy my boss goes all cranky on me.  
*(impersonating)*  
 Beats me how you can't sell the world's best movie magazine outside a goddamn picturehouse?  
*(pause)*  
 Oh, I didn't mean to blaspheme, but it ain't me -- It's my boss. I said he was cranky.

*Lime gives her a quarter. She hands him the latest edition.*

LIME: Hey, you missed something. Seems monster pictures are gonna be all the rage.  
*(reading verbatim)*  
 "Following the success of *Dracula*, Carl Laemmle Junior, Head of Universal Pictures, will thrill and terrify audiences all over again with the tale of a man brought back from the dead."

NEWSGIRL: Sounds like a hayride; although from what I hear that Laemmle's a certified crazy. Sure glad he ain't my boss!

LIME: I wonder what it's really like? Out there in Hollywood, I mean?

NEWSGIRL: I'd say it's what you've always been looking for—

*A streetlight comes on.*

**Music #4:           CREATE A LIFE**

LIME:               GLOW STREET LIGHT  
 RID THE DARK OF ITS BITE  
 BETWEEN THE LINDEN BOUGHS  
 OUT OF THIS COBBLED DROWSE  
 WHEN YOU CREATE A LIFE  
 FAR FROM YOUR OWN  
 FALLS EARLY THE DARKNESS  
 AND THE TROLLEYS CAN'T CARRY YOU HOME.

NEWSGIRL:       GO WHERE YOU MIGHT  
 RIDE THROUGH EVERY STOPLIGHT  
 AND WEAR THAT FLASHY NECKTIE  
 FOR ALL OF THE PASSERS-BY  
 TO CREATE A LIFE  
 FAR FROM YOUR OWN  
 FIND EARLY GREEN PASTURES  
 DON'T LET THE DARKNESS FOLLOW YOU HOME.

LIME:               CHICAGO...  
 FROM A WALK-UP NEAR MIDWAY  
 TO SUMMA CUM LAUDE  
 I ROSE TO THE HEIGHTS  
 DESPITE MY CAST...

*The Newsgirl slips on the black trenchcoat and Homburg.*

NEWSGIRL:       (To audience) He's perfect!

*She makes a dramatic exit and the stage transforms... becoming the entryway to Universal City. Full of California sunshine.*

LIME:               ... I GRIP MY VALISE  
 A MEDICAL DOCTOR  
 THROUGH THIS STUDIO GATE  
 PAST THE CAMELS AND GAFFERS  
 I NEVER IMAGINED  
 HOW THE STARS WOULD ALIGN FOR ME  
 -- CUT SO DEEP, LIKE FATE.

HEAR MY FRIEND  
 NOTES THAT FLY FROM THE PAGE  
 UP TO THE SILVER SCREEN  
 HE TOLD ME OF HIS DREAM  
 HOW HE'D CREATE A LIFE...

GLOW STREET LIGHT  
 RID THE DARK OF ITS BITE  
 AND SHOW ME ONE MORE NIGHT.

*Lights dim before coming up on...*

**Act 1, Scene 5**

*Backroom of movie theater.  
Somewhere in Los Angeles. November 1971.*

*Laemmle stands by the drinks cabinet. Fixes himself something.  
Bernhard studies the photo portraits.*

**LAEMMLE:** So you got a couple of nobodies with stars in their eyes.

**BERNHARD:** Precisely! It's the Hollywood dream. Marianne and Lime epitomize that dream—

*Laemmle crosses to center stage.*

**LAEMMLE:** You wanna tell them about the Hollywood dream -- Well, you tell them about a man who dared to play God. And the studio that put it up on the screen just so ordinary folks could see it and tell their friends -- So that you couldn't move for lines around the block to see a whole bunch of things they'd never set eyes on before.

*(pause)*

Cause, believe me, your sophisticated crowd out there are buying the same dreams -- Oh, last week they were throwing rose petals over some mystic touting karma or whatever the hell those guys are selling; but tonight they've come for our golden age illusions of glamor and terror -- Hell, those photographs are testament to that.

*(pause)*

Oh, and we made it look effortless into the bargain. You couldn't let them see how damn hard we worked or how much we cared.

*Lights dim before coming up on...*

**Act 1, Scene 6:**

*Laemmle's Office, Universal Studios.  
September 1931.*

*Laemmle is sat at a desk with all the executive trappings: a photograph of his father, brass paperweight, fountainpen holder, glass ashtray, desk diary and telephone. Behind him, the wall is covered by velvet drapes. Three ACCOUNTANTS enter waving an assortment of paperwork.*

ACCOUNTANT 1: (*Incredulous*) Monsters made out of body-parts from the grave reanimated by electrical storms! Carl, you're turning the studio into a crazyhouse.

LAEMMLE: Instant box-office gold, gentlemen!

ACCOUNTANT 2: That was last week. Our projections say the public wants homespun musicals. They're going gaga over on Broadway for this Astaire fella -- They say he's better than Pavlova—

ACCOUNTANT 3: Carl, there's a wonderful script in your readers' office -- *California Melody 1931*—

LAEMMLE: Yeah, I saw the coverage -- Look, I'd be laughed off the lot. And if you think I'm gonna tell Van Sloan he'll be busting out a show tune on his next picture—  
(*to audience*)  
Jeez, why's everyone so nuts about musicals?  
(*back to Accountants*)  
More to the point, why are we even having this conversation? *Dracula* sold fifty-thousand tickets within forty-eight hours of its New York opening -- Yeah, I know: that's New York. They love a guy who stays up all night then sleeps in a box. But you ever think about that Spanish version we shot after hours? Melford got it made for sixty-six thousand and it's doing gangbusters all over Central and Latin America. Hell, we'll do this one in Spanish if we have to.

ACCOUNTANT 1: They'll love it in Guatemala.

LAEMMLE: Sure they will. They're depressed. Hell, I'm depressed. I got clowns telling me to greenlight some ten-cent musical set in an out of town skate-rink.  
(*then*)  
Look, folk just wanna forget their troubles -- Forget the stock market crashed; forget their corn crop got ravaged by a plague of locusts; and forget their boss told 'em there's no use showing up for work tomorrow.

ACCOUNTANT 2: A perfect case for *California Melody 1931*.  
(*waving some figures around*)  
What's more, these projections—

*Laemmler grabs the offending paperwork. Rips it in two!*

LAEMMLE: Projections! Don't you guys think about anything else?

ACCOUNTANTS: (*In unison*) No!

*Laemmle stands. Contorts himself like Max Schreck in Nosferatu.*

LAEMMLE: Not shadows on a dark night or that mysterious stranger who hides from daylight?

ACCOUNTANT 3: Like vampires in tuxedos?

LAEMMLE: Audiences were mesmerized!

ACCOUNTANT 1: They were mesmerized alright. By Lugosi's dopey grin. As for that Mexican *Cónde Dracula* -- Where'd they dig him up from?

ACCOUNTANT 2: You've been shut up in this office too long, Carl. It's given you a warped perspective -- Musicals are the next big thing.  
(*pause*)  
Like we were saying, *California Melody*—

LAEMMLE: Musicals, musicals! Sheesh...

ACCOUNTANT 3: At least consider adapting an *American* novel?

ACCOUNTANT 1: *Little Women*, for instance?

LAEMMLE: *Little Women*...? Sure, I can see it now: It's night. Jo hears a noise. Goes to the window. There's a lightning storm. Suddenly, she screams! Cause pressed up against the window, illuminated by weird electricity, is the most horrific thing she ever saw: the face of a man built from the lifeless limbs of the dead!  
(*pause*)  
Now that, fellas, is entertainment!

ACCOUNTANT 2: (*Pointing to torn-up sheet*) You ever look at those? I mean, really chew the numbers?

*Laemmle pulls back the LEFT-HAND drape to reveal a wallchart filled with graphical projections. He grabs the accompanying POINTER.*

LAEMMLE: You think I coasted in yesterday? I grew up in the picture business!

*Laemmle dances up a storm with the pointer—*



**Music #5: MONSTERS & MARGINS**

LAEMMLE: STUDIO BOOKS  
 WERE ALL IN THE RED  
 WHEN POPS SAID TO ME  
 "TAKE THE REINS  
 -- BOX-OFFICE BUST  
 OUR DRAMA'S TOO SWEET  
 THIS SANDAL AND SWORD'S  
 NO ZEST FOR DEPRESSION..."  
 DREAD'S THE BEST  
 SO REPEAT AFTER ME  
 WHO'S NEXT  
 IN THE MONSTER ROSTER  
 FOR A MOVIE RELEASE, WIDESPREAD?  
 RKO'S WORKING ON AN OVERSTUFFED MONKEY  
 WE'VE GOT SOMETHING HUMAN-LIKE INSTEAD.

ACCOUNTANTS: THESE MONSTERS, MARGINS  
 TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS  
 CLEAR THESE COLUMNS OUT OF RED.

LAEMMLE: DESPITE NO DINNER ON TABLES  
 SHOES ON KIDS  
 RENTS FOR THE LANDLORD  
 LIFE ON SKIDS  
 THERE'S ALWAYS A QUARTER SOMEWHERE BE HAD  
 FORGET ALL THE SAD  
 BE FRIGHTENED OUT OF ONE'S WITS.

HAND ME THE PHONE  
 GIVE ME THE COMPOSERS' BACKROOM  
 I NEED A MUSICIAN  
 GOT SOMEONE THERE TO EXHUME  
 SOMEONE NOT CRUSHED UNDER GAMBLING DEBT  
 NOR DIVORCE SETTLEMENT  
 OR A PENCHANT FOR GIRLS IN THE CHORUS LINE  
 FOR MY MASTERPIECE IN DEVELOPMENT  
 FRANKENSTEIN.

*Laemmle now pulls back the RIGHT-HAND drape to reveal artwork  
 emblazoned with the tagline: FRANKENSTEIN ~ THE MAN WHO MADE A  
 MONSTER.*

ACCOUNTANTS: THESE MONSTERS, MARGINS  
 TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS  
 CLEAR THESE COLUMNS OUT OF RED.

*Bernhard's YOUNGER SELF enters.*

LAEMMLE: WELCOME TO MY OFFICE  
 TAKE THAT ARMCHAIR  
 OF TURKISH MOHAIR  
 AND SOME ARROWHEAD WATER  
 -- THIS DAY AND ME CAN'T GET ANY HOTTER.

ACCOUNTANTS: MISTER L...

BERNHARD: I rushed right here, Mr. Laemmler. What—?

LAEMMLE: STUDIO BOOKS  
 WERE BLOODIED WITH RED  
 WHEN I SAID TO POPS  
 "LET ME TAKE THE REINS  
 -- THEATER SEATS RUST  
 OUR COWBOYS TOO NEAT  
 THOSE BIBLICAL HORDES  
 NO ZEST FOR DEPRESSION..."  
 DREAD'S THE BEST  
 RING *VARIETY*—  
 TELL THEM WHO'S NEXT  
 IN THE MONSTER ROSTER  
 THIS GERMAN WITH A STITCHED-ON HEAD  
 KARLOFF'S MORE THAN SOME ELECTRIFIED FLUNKY  
 GIMME MUSIC, GIMME MUSIC BACK FROM THE DEAD.

ACCOUNTANTS: THESE MONSTERS, MARGINS  
 TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS  
 CLEAR THESE COLUMNS OUT OF RED.

LAEMMLE: THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU  
 THAT PLAYS ON MY NERVES  
 JUST WHAT HORROR DESERVES.

DESPITE NO DINNER ON TABLES  
 SHOES ON KIDS  
 RENTS FOR THE LANDLORD  
 LIFE ON SKIDS  
 THERE'S ALWAYS A QUARTER SOMEWHERE BE HAD.

ACCOUNTANTS: YOU'LL WRITE HIM A SCORE  
 THAT PLAYS LIKE NO OTHER—

LAEMMLE THESE MONSTERS, MARGINS  
 TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS  
 CLEAR THESE COLUMNS OUT OF RED.

ACCOUNTANTS: ENTER SOME DARKNESS, BOY  
 FOLLOW HIM BROTHER.

LAEMMLE: WELCOME TO MY MONSTER PANTHEON!

*The defeated accountants exit. Laemmle calls after them:*

LAEMMLE:           Next time I'll do *Anne of Green Gables!*  
                           *(turning to Bernhard)*  
                           Sorry about that. Hazard of running a movie  
                           studio.  
                           *(then)*  
                           I need a favor, Mr. Kaun—

*The telephone RINGS.*

LAEMMLE:           I should get that.

*Laemmle picks up. Listens a moment.*

LAEMMLE:           *(Into receiver)* I'll get back to you when  
                           I've actually got five seconds—

*Laemmle slams down the receiver. Turns to Bernhard.*

LAEMMLE:           Lot physician. Can I make it in for a  
                           checkup Thursday afternoon? Well, let's see:  
                           I'm trying to run a studio so there'll be  
                           the usual flimflam with the board in the  
                           morning -- I'll also have to remind them I  
                           got the distributor on my tail; and that  
                           now there's three accountants busting my  
                           balls. You saw them, right? Not to mention—

*Marianne enters. She's still wearing that crushed beret, but now  
 it's matched with a business suit. She's also clutching a  
 bradded script with a coverage sheet clipped on top. Bernhard  
 stands. Smiles at her.*

MARIANNE:         Oh, I'm sorry Mr. Laemmle. I should have  
                           knocked -- I didn't realize... but you said  
                           to let you know as soon as I had the  
                           *Sarcophagus* coverage—

LAEMMLE:           That's okay, Miss. Melrose. You can leave it  
                           on my desk -- I'll take the short version.

MARIANNE:         The script?

LAEMMLE:           No, Beethoven's Fifth! Of course, the script.

MARIANNE:         The script. Oh, Lordy -- Well, that Egyptian  
                           princess back from the tomb premise was  
                           promising, but then she transforms herself  
                           into a leopard at a tennis party in the  
                           Hamptons and... Oh, it's as preposterous as  
                           it sounds—

LAEMMLE: Would they go for it in the sticks?

MARIANNE: ... the sticks?

LAEMMLE: Sun River or whatever place you said you're from? Would they line up for this Egyptian cat creature concoction?

BERNHARD: Boy, Sun River... Sure sounds nice.

MARIANNE: Oh, it is—

LAEMMLE: Miss. Melrose—?

MARIANNE: Sorry, Mr. Laemmle -- Yes. I mean... No. Actually, I don't know. They might, but then again they might not—

LAEMMLE: Most insightful, Miss. Melrose.  
*(sarcastic)*  
 You should work in Publicity.  
*(suddenly, to Bernhard)*  
 Oh, that favor I mentioned -- We're throwing a party for the studio crowd, Saturday. Anyhow, I scheduled our usual quartet. Only their piano player went and got his hand stuck in an elevator. Long story short, I'm in a spot. Every ivory tinkler between here and Tijuana is booked. You think you could sit in...?

BERNHARD: Saturday...?

LAEMMLE: Guests arrive from eight; but the guys pitch up half-hour beforehand -- They play Gershwin, Cole Porter. All the jazzy stuff. I'll give you double union rate and as much lobster risotto as you can handle—

BERNHARD: Well, I guess—

LAEMMLE: Terrific. You'll get ahead in this business, Mr. Kaun.

BERNHARD: But where is it? I've not been to your—

LAEMMLE: Dias Dorados. It's off Benedict.

MARIANNE: Hey, I once walked by that place! It's real fancy. Well, they all are; but that ring-a-ding stood out cause I recognized it from  
 (CONT'D)

MARIANNE: some highbrow glossy -- I had a lot of time to kill at auditions. I even remember what it said: that Dias Dorados had "all the austerity of the missions". How about that?

BERNHARD: You must have a wonderful memory?

MARIANNE: Oh, I'd forget my hat if I didn't pin it to my head.  
(*then*)  
Anyhow, I doubt scriptreaders are invited.

LAEMMLE: On that point, Miss Melrose, you are correct.

BERNHARD: Well, I could sure use a page turner. And what with Miss Melrose knowing the place—

MARIANNE: Someone who turns over sheet music for a pianist. But I can't read music?

BERNHARD: I'll just nod my head. With your memory it'll be a cinch.

MARIANNE: Well, knock me down—!  
(*remembers*)  
Oh, wait. Saturday evening? I'll be at Mrs. Carrington's place and won't get through until around a quarter after five -- I housekeep Saturday afternoons, but it should be alright.

BERNHARD: (*Extending hand*) I'm Bernhard Kaun. Composer and musical arranger.

MARIANNE: (*Accepting his hand*) Marianne Melrose. Reader and failed Broadway hopeful—

LAEMMLE: Jeez, when did this become a dating agency—  
(*realizing*)  
Hey, what'd you say?

MARIANNE: About being a failure on Broadway?

LAEMMLE: No, about Saturday afternoon?

MARIANNE: Oh, well...  
(*thinking he's put out about her other job*)  
You see, I promised my mother I'd find a respectable boarding-house and... I guess I could find something cheaper, but it's convenient and the landlady does look after us—