



SHELLEY WINTERS  
"Beautiful but unprincipled"

Payne) and Silky (Dan Duryea). But *Larceny* is interesting for other things besides a neat piece of script-writing. It contains some unusually good direction (by George Sherman) for the class of film to which it belongs, and some polished acting by the principal (though villainous) characters. In particular a stimulating performance is given by the female villain of the piece, an attractive young platinum blonde named Shelley Winters, who may be remembered as the waitress in Ronald Colman's *A Double Life*.

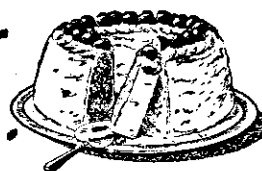
Having made a six-figure fortune out of a phoney yacht-club deal, the two gentlemen crooks set to work on a scheme to finance an equally phoney youth-centre as a war memorial in the town of Mission City. Rick is the smooth-talking contact man who sells everybody the idea, while Silky is the brains of the gang who waits in the background to collect the subscriptions as they roll in. Unfortunately Rick is such a lady-killer that he gets amorously involved with Silky's girl-friend Tory (Shelley Winters), at the same time as he falls in love with the rich but innocent young war-widow (Joan Caulfield), whom he is supposed to be fleeing over the memorial scheme.

Just when he has a cheque for a hundred thousand dollars in his pocket and is ready to make a conscience-troubled getaway, the two girls meet for the first time and discover just how the land lies. In the ensuing mix-up Tory is shot dead, and Rick calls in the cops. He has himself and the rest of the gang arrested, so that after he has served his sentence he can give up his life of crime and marry the young widow, who naturally loves him still, in spite of all his misdeeds.

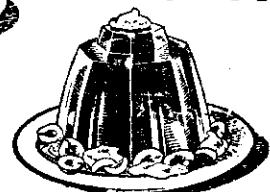
Despite this superficial plot the picture has been produced with a slickness which, if it does nothing more, shows its kinship with the type of story that probably contained its genesis (the "slicks" as opposed to the "pulp" of the magazine trade). Dan Duryea is agreeably cool and ruthless as the master-mind, while John Payne has a number of sweetly romantic lines which he tosses off with the artistry of an old hand. And Shelley Winters, as the beautiful but unprincipled girl-friend of these two shady characters, moves across the screen with considerable vivacity and refreshing high spirits.



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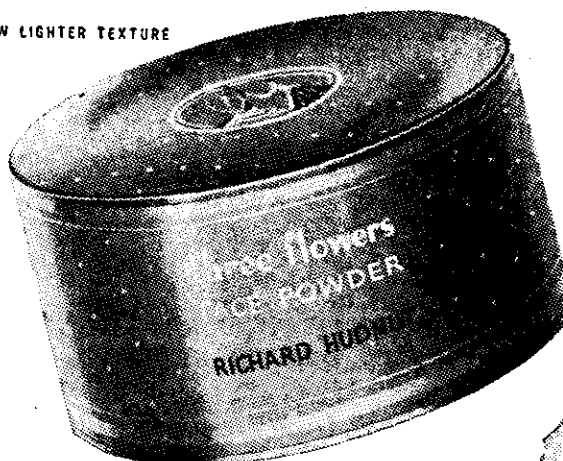
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