

SPEAKING CANDIDLY

MOONTIDE

(20th Century-Fox)

REMEMBER *Angels Over Broadway?* Remember *Out of the Fog*—especially *Out of the Fog*—well, you've some idea of the type of film that *Moontide* is. A film that belongs largely to the night-time, but not the gay night-time; a film that deals with people who live on the precarious edge of crime; a film that won't be a box-office success, but one that will be remembered for a long time by all the people who are interested in the film as art, and especially by all the people who are interested in the art of Thomas Mitchell and Ida Lupino, and, from now on, in the art of Jean Gabin.

Archie Mayo directed *Moontide*, and if he had never done any other good jobs I'd say he had become a director of sensibility overnight, as it were. And if he never does another good job, our little man will still give him a cheer for this film.

According to the theatre advertising, Jean Gabin ("making his first film in America, and pronounced Gab-ban"), is the star. Ida Lupino comes second, and Thomas Mitchell and Claude Rains are placed equal third. But have you ever seen Thomas Mitchell act badly? He has played sympathetic parts and unsympathetic ones—and here he has a very unsympathetic one—but I always leave the theatre feeling "honours to Thomas Mitchell." Make this film a must on your list, and watch that face that was so benign in *Angels Over Broadway*, so remorseful in *Out of the Fog*; watch greed and cunning, and perhaps all of the seven deadly sins in the face of this character who is extortioner and black-mailer and murderer; watch that terrified flight at the last towards the angry sea and you'll surely agree: "Honours to Thomas Mitchell." The woman sitting next to me was apparently out there on the rocks with Jean Gabin and Thomas Mitchell (Tiny), at the end; for as Gabin cried "Come back!" to the terrified extortioner, at bay at last (only it wasn't a bay; it was sharp, black rocks and a pounding sea), she leaned forward and said clearly: "No, let him go. Best thing for him."

But honours also to Ida Lupino, Jean Gabin and Claude Rains. Gabin is Bo-bo, the man with strong wrists, the man who gets so drunk he cannot remember what happened the night before, the man who is reminded from time to time by Tiny, his friend, that once he choked a man to death. So when Pop Kelly is murdered (the old man has been strangled), Bo-bo has a very horrible time trying in vain to remember where he was all night. And Tiny says: "I know who killed Pop Kelly." He says it also to Ida Lupino—who, for a reason that is never told, tried to drown herself, and was saved by Bo-bo. He does not need to say it to Claude Rains (Nutsy), for that very kind little friend has found the name Pop Kelly in the old hat that Bo-bo wore home the night of the murder. So just to save possible trouble, he burns the hat. In the end, it is Ida Lupino, the terrified bride, who

discovers the clue to the murder of Pop Kelly, and in discovering it becomes herself the victim of those terrible hands. But do not be alarmed. This film ends well for the hero and the heroine.


Ida Lupino is building up her record of good performances in far from easy parts. She is here the girl who has never known a kindness from a human being, suddenly confronted with kindness. It is not criticism to say I would like to see her next in a less tense role; but it doesn't matter—I'll go to see her just the same; and Thomas Mitchell; and Jean Gabin.

THEY ALL KISSED THE BRIDE

(Columbia)

IF I had gone to the theatre in ignorance of what was on and had missed the credit titles, I could have sworn that this was an M-G-M picture. It wasn't, but I still could have sworn. There, for a start, were those indigenous M-G-M stars, Joan Crawford and Melvyn Douglas, not to mention Ronald Young and Billie Burke; there was the old familiar society set-up; and there was the story—stop me if you've heard this one—about the Ruthless Big Business Woman who, under the influence of love, becomes just plain Woman (well, hardly plain; Joan Crawford is never that). The chief agent in the softening-up process is Melvyn Douglas as a crusading author, whose original intention is to publish a book exposing the callous commercial practices of the heroine, but who loses that desire as soon as he sets eyes on her. It is then revealed that Joan Crawford's pose as a domineering masculine type is due to the fact that she's really afraid of men, and that Melvyn Douglas poses as a lady-killer, because in his heart of hearts he is afraid of women. Anybody who cares to apply this ingenious theory to me and my dislike for a certain type of film is welcome to try.

The title, by the way, is practically meaningless. And so far as plot and treatment go, I have seldom seen a more impossible proposition put over less plausibly or with less good taste. The method of construction is so much a matter of pulling stock situations haphazardly out of pigeon-holes that at least one important character gets completely mislaid. Pre-fabrication may be all right for houses, but hardly for pictures.



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