SEQUENCE "A"

A-1-4 START the picture with the actual street sign: SUNSET BOULEVARD, stencilled on a curbstope. In the gutter lie dead leaves, scraps of paper, burnt matches and cigarette butts. It is early morning.

Now the CAMERA leaves the sign and MOVES EAST, the grey asphalt of the street filling the screen. As speed accelerates to around 40 m.p.h., traffic demarcations, white arrows, speed-limit warnings, manhole covers, etc., flash by. SUPERIMPOSED on all this are the CREDIT TITLES, in the stencilled style of the street sign.

Over the scene we now hear sirens. Police squad cars hurtle toward the camera, turn off the road into a driveway with squealing brakes. Dismounted motorcycle cops stand directing the cars in.

A-5 PATIO AND POOL OF MANSION

The policemen and newspaper reporters and photographers have jumped out of the cars and are running up to the pool, in which a body is seen floating. Photographers' bulbs flash in rapid succession.

MAN'S VOICE

Yes, this is Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, California. It's about five o'clock in the morning. That's the Homicide Squad, complete with detectives and newspaper men.

A murder has been reported from one of those great big houses in the ten thousand block. You'll read all about it in the late editions, I'm sure. You'll get it over your radio, and see it on television -- because an old-time star is involved. one of the biggest. But before you hear it all distorted and blown out of
FLASH OF THE BODY

Angle up through the water from the bottom of the pool, as the body floats face downward. It is a well-dressed young man.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

HOLLYWOOD, SEEN FROM THE HILLTOP AT IVAR & FRANKLIN STREETS

It is a crisp sunny day. The voice continues speaking as the camera pans toward the Alto Nido Apartment House, an ugly Moorish structure of stucco, about four stories high. Camera moves toward an open window on the third floor, where we look in on Joe Gillis' apartment. Joe Gillis, barefooted and wearing nothing but an old bathrobe, is sitting on the bed. In front of him, on a straight chair, is a portable typewriter. Beside him, on the bed, is a

proportion, before those Hollywood columnists get their hands on it, maybe you'd like to hear the facts, the whole truth...

If so, you've come to the right party... You see, the body of a young man was found floating in the pool of her mansion, with two shots in his back and one in his stomach. Nobody important, really. Just a movie writer with a couple of "B" pictures to his credit. The poor dope. He always wanted a pool Well, in the end he got himself a pool -- only the price turned out to be a little high...

Let's go back about six months and find the day when it all started.

I was living in an apartment house above Franklin and Ivar. Things were tough at the moment. I hadn't worked in a studio for a long time. So I there grinding out original stories, two a week. Only I seemed to have lost my touch. Maybe they weren't original enough. Maybe they were too original. All I know is they didn't sell.
dirty ashtray and a scattering of type written and pencil-marked pages. Gillis is typing. with a pencil clenched between his teeth.

A-8  JOE GILLIS' APARTMENT

It is a one-room affair with an unmade Murphy bed pulled out of the wall at which Gillis sits typing. There are a couple of worn-out plush chairs and a Spanish-style, wrought-iron standing lamp. Also a small desk littered with books and letters, and a chest of drawers with a portable phonograph and some records on top. On the walls are a couple of reproductions of characterless paintings, with laundry bills and snapshots stuck in the frames. Through an archway can he seen a tiny kitchenette, complete with unwashed coffee pot and cup, empty tin cans, orange peels, etc. The effect is dingy and cheerless -- just another furnished apartment. The buzzer SOUNDS.

GILLIS

Yeah.

The buzzer SOUNDS again. Gillis gets up and opens the door. Two men wearing hats stand outside one of them carrying a briefcase.

NO. 1

Joseph C. Gillis?

GILLIS

That's right.

The men ease into the room. No. 1 hands Gillis a business card.

NO. 1

We've come for the car.

GILLIS

What car?

NO. 2

(Consulting a paper)

1946 Plymouth convertible. California license 97 N 567.
NO. 1
Where are the keys?

GILLIS
Why should I give you the keys?

NO. 1
Because the company's played ball with you long enough. Because you're three payments behind. And because we've got a Court order. Come on -- the keys.

NO. 2
Or do you want us to jack it up and haul it away?

GILLIS
Relax, fans. The car isn't here.

NO. 1
Is that so?

GILLIS
I lent it to a friend of mine. He took it up to Palm Springs.

NO. 1
Had to get away for his health, I suppose.

GILLIS
You don't believe me? Look in the garage.

NO. 1
Sure we believe you, only now we want you to believe us. That car better be back here by noon tomorrow, or there's going to be fireworks.

GILLIS
You say the cutest things.

The men leave. Gillis stands pondering beside the door for a moment. Then he walks to the center of the room and, with his back to the

GILLIS' VOICE
Well, I needed about two hundred and ninety dollars and I needed it real quick, or I'd lose my car. It wasn't in Palm Springs
CAMERA, slips into a pair of gray slacks. There is a metallic noise as some loose change and keys drop from the trouser pockets. As Gillis bends over to pick them up, we see that he has dropped the car keys, identifiable because of a rabbit's foot and a miniature license plate attached to the key-ring. Gillis pockets the keys and as he starts to put on a shirt.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-9

EXTerior OF Rudy'S ShOESHiNE pARlor (DAY)

I knew they'd be coming around and I wasn't taking any chances, so I kept it a couple of blocks away in a parking lot behind Rudy's Shoe-shine Parlor. Rudy never asked any questions. He'd just look at your heels and know the score.

PAN BEHIND the shack to Gillis' Car, a yellow 1946 Plymouth convertible with the top down. Gillis enters the SHOT. He is wearing a tweed sport jacket, a tan polo shirt, and moccasins. He steps into the car and drives it off. Rudy winks after him.

A-10

THE ALLEY NEXT TO Sidney'S MEN'S SHOp ON Bbronson AVE.

Gillis drives into the alley and parks his car right behind a delivery truck. PAN AND FOLLOW HIM as he gets out, walks around the corner into Bronson and then toward the towering main gate of
Paramount. A few loafers, studio cops and extras are lounging there. His name was Sheldrake. He was a smart producer, with a set of ulcers to prove it.

Dissolve to:

A-11 SHELDRAKE'S OFFICE

It is in the style of a Paramount executive's office -- mahogany, leather, and a little chintz. On the walls are some large framed photographs of Paramount stars, with dedications to Mr. Sheldrake. Also a couple of framed critics' awards certificates, and an Oscar on a bookshelf. A shooting schedule chart is thumb-tacked into a large bulletin board. There are piles or scripts, a few pipes and, somewhere in the background, some set models.

Start on Sheldrake. He is about 45. Behind his worried face there hides a coated tongue. He is engaged in changing the stained filter cigarette in his Zeus holder.

SHELDRAKE
All right, Gillis. You've got five minutes. What's your story about?

GILLIS
It's about a ball player, a rookie shortstop that's batting 347. The poor kid was once mixed up in a hold-up. But he's trying to go straight -- except there's a bunch of gamblers who won't let him.

SHELDRAKE
So they tell the kid to throw the World Series, or else, huh?

GILLIS
More or less. Only for the end I've got a gimmick that's real good.

A secretary enters, carrying a glass or milk. She opens a drawer and takes out a bottle of pills for Sheldrake.

SHELDRAKE
Got a title?
GILLIS

Bases Loaded. There's a 40-page outline.

SHELDRAKE

(To the secretary)
Get the Readers' Department and see what they have on Bases Loaded.

The secretary exits. Sheldrake takes a pill and washes it down with some milk.

GILLIS

They're pretty hot about it over at Twentieth, but I think Zanuck's all wet. Can you see Ty Power as a shortstop? You've got the best man for it right here on this lot. Alan Ladd. Good change of pace for Alan Ladd. There's another thing: it's pretty simple to shoot. Lot of outdoor stuff. Bet you could make the whole thing for under a million. And there's a great little part for Bill Demarest. One of the trainers, an oldtime player who got beaned and goes out of his head sometimes.

The door opens and Betty Schaefer enters -- a clean-cut, nice looking girl of 21, with a bright, alert manner. Dressed in tweed skirt, Brooks sweater and pearls, and carrying a folder of papers. She puts them on Sheldrake's desk, not noticing Gillis, who stands near the door.

BETTY

Hello, Mr. Sheldrake. On that Bases Loaded. I covered it with a 2-page synopsis.

(She holds it out)
But I wouldn't bother.

SHELDRAKE

What's wrong with it?

BETTY

It's from hunger.
SHELDRAKE
Nothing for Ladd?

BETTY
Just a rehash of something that wasn't very good to begin with.

SHELDRAKE
I'm sure you'll be glad to meet Mr. Gillis. He wrote it.

Betty turns towards Gillis, embarrassed.

SHELDRAKE
This is Miss Kramer.

BETTY
Schaefer. Betty Schaefer. And right now I wish I could crawl into a hole and pull it in after me.

GILLIS
If I could be of any help...

BETTY
I'm sorry, Mr. Gillis, but I just don't think it's any good. I found it flat and banal.

GILLIS
Exactly what kind of material do you recommend? James Joyce? Dostoosvsky?

SHELDRAKE
Name dropper.

BETTY
I just think pictures should say a little something.

GILLIS
Oh, you're one of the message kids. Just a story won't do. You'd have turned down Gone With the Wind.

SHELDRAKE
No, that was me. I said, Who wants to see a Civil War picture?
BETTY
Perhaps the reason I hated Bases Loaded is that I knew your name. I'd always heard you had some talent.

GILLIS
That was last year. This year I'm trying to earn a living.

BETTY
So you take Plot 27-A, make it glossy, make it slick --

SHELDRAKE
Carefull Those are dirty words! You sound like a bunch of New York critics. Thank you, Miss Schaefer.

BETTY
Goodbye, Mr. Gillis.

GILLIS
Goodbye. Next time I'll write The Naked and the Dead.

Betty leaves.

SHELDRAKE
Well, seems like Zanuck's got himself a baseball picture.

GILLIS
Mr. Sheldrake, I don't want you to think I thought this was going to win any Academy Award.

SHELDRAKE
(His mind free-wheeling)
Of course, we're always looking for a Betty Hutton. Do you see it as a Betty Hutton?

GILLIS
Frankly, no.

SHELDRAKE
(Amusing himself)
Now wait a minute. If we made it a girls' softball team, put
in a few numbers. Might make a
cute musical: It Happened in
the Bull Pen -- the story of a
Woman.

GILLIS
You trying to be funny? -- because
I'm all out of laughs. I'm over a
barrel and I need a job.

SHELDRAKE
Sure, Gillis. If something should
come along -

GILLIS
Along is no good. I need it now.

SHELDRAKE
Haven't got a thing.

GILLIS
Any kind of assignment. Additional
Dialogue.

SHELDRAKE
There's nothing, Gillis. Not
even if you were a relative.

GILLIS
(Hating it)
Look, Mr. Sheldrake, could you
let me have three hundred bucks
yourself, as a personal loan?

SHELDRAKE
Could I? Gillis, last year some-
body talked me into buying a ranch
in the valley. So I borrowed money
from the bank so I could pay for
the ranch. This year I had to
mortgage the ranch so I could keep
up my life insurance so I could
borrow on the insurance so I could
pay my income tax. Now if Dewey
had been elected -

GILLIS
Goodbye, Mr. Sheldrake.

DISSOLVE TO:
A-12  EXT. SCHWAB'S DRUG STORE  
(EARLY AFTERNOON ACTIVITY)  

MOVE IN toward drug store and

DISSOLVE TO:

A-13  INT. SCHWAB'S DRUG STORE

The usual Schwabadero crowd sits at the fountain, gossips at the cigar-stand, loiters by the magazine display.
MOVE IN towards the TWO TELEPHONE BOOTHS. In one of them sits Gillis, a stack of nickels in front of him. He's doing a lot of talking into the telephone, hanging up, dropping another nickel, dialing, talking again.

I got myself ten nickels and started sending out a general S.O.S. Couldn't get hold of my agent, naturally. So then I called a pal of mine, name of Artie Green -- an awful nice guy, an assistant director. He could let me have twenty, but twenty wouldn't do.

GILLIS' VOICE (Cont.)
Then I talked to a couple of yes men at Twentieth. To me they said no. Finally I located that agent of mine, the big faker. Was he out digging up a job for poor Joe Gillis? Hmph! He was hard at work in Bel Air, making with the golf clubs.

Gillis hangs up with a curse, opens the door of the booth, emerges, wiping the sweat from his forehead. He walks toward the exit. He is stopped by the voice of

SKOLSKY
Hello, Gillis.

Gillis looks around. At the fountain sits Skolsky, drinking a cup of coffee.

GILLIS
Hello, Mr. Skolsky.

SKOLSKY
Got anything for the column?

GILLIS
Sure. Just sold an original for a hundred grand. The Life of the Warner Brothers. Starring the Ritz Brothers. Playing opposite the Andrew Sisters.

SKOLSKY
(With a sour smile)
But don't get me wrong -- I love Hollywood.

Gillis walks out.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-14 THE BEL AIR GOLF LINKS

On a sun-dappled green edged with tall sycamores, stands Morino, the agent, a caddy and a nondescript opponent in the background. Gillis has evidently stated his problem already.

MORINO
So you need three hundred dollars?
Of course, I could give you three hundred dollars. Only I'm not going to.

GILLIS
No?

MORINO
Gillis, get this through your head. I'm not just your agent. It's not the ten per cent. I'm your friend.

He sinks his putt and walks toward the next tee, Gillis following him.

GILLIS
How's that about your being my friend?
MORINO
Don't you know the finest things in the world have been written on an empty stomach? Once a talent like yours gets into that Mocambo-Romanoff rut, you're through.

GILLIS
Forget Romanoff's. It's the car I'm talking about. If I lose my car it's like having my legs out off.

MORINO
Greatest thing that could happen to you. Now you'll have to sit behind that typewriter. Now you'll have to write.

GILLIS
What do you think I've been doing? I need three hundred dollars.

MORINO
(Icily)
Maybe what you need is another agent.

He bends down to tee up his ball. Gillis turns away.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-15 GILLIS IN HIS OPEN CAR

driving down Sunset towards Hollywood. He drives slowly. His mind is working.

GILLIS' VOICE
As I drove back towards town I took inventory of my prospects. They now added up to exactly zero. Apparently I just didn't have what it takes, and the time had come to wrap up the whole Hollywood deal and go home. Maybe if I hocked all my junk there'd be enough for a bus ticket back to Ohio, back to that thirty-five-dollar-a-week job behind the copy desk of the Dayton Evening Post, if it was still open. Back to the smirking delight of the whole office. All right you wise guys. why don't you go out and take a crack at Hollywood? Maybe you think

Gillis stops his car at a red light by the main entrance to Bel Air.
Suddenly his eyes fall on:

A-16  **ANOTHER CAR**

It is a dark-green Dodge business coupe, also waiting for the light to change, but headed in the opposite direction. In it are the two finance company men. They spot Gillis in his car and exchange looks. From across the intersection Gillis recognizes them and pulls down the leather sunshade to screen his face. As the light changes, Gillis gives his car the gun and shoots away. The men narrowly avoid hitting another car as they make a U-turn into oncoming traffic and start after him.

A-17  **THE CHASE**

to

A-21  Very short, very sharp, told in FLASHES. (Use locations on Sunset between Bel Air and Holmby Hills). The men lose Gillis around a bend, catch sight of him and then -- while they are trapped behind a slow-moving truck. He disappears again.

A-22  **GILLIS**

He is driving as fast as he dares, keeping an eye out for pursuit in his rear-view mirror. Suddenly his right front tire blows out. Gillis clutches desperately at the steering wheel and manages to turn the careening car into

A-23  **A DRIVEWAY**

It is overgrown with weeds and screened from the street by bushes and trees. Gillis stops his car about thirty feet from the street and looks back.

**GILLIS' VOICE**
Was I far enough ahead?

A-24  **THE OTHER CAR**

shoots past the driveway, still looking for Gillis.

A-25  **GILLIS**

He watches his pursuers shoot past and out of sight. He opens the door and looks down at GILLIS' VOICE Yeah...

I had landed myself in the
the flat tire. Then he looks around to see where he is.

A-26    DRIVeway WITH GARAGE

An enormous, five-car affair. neglected and empty-looking.

A-27    GILLIS

He gets back into his car and carefully pilots the limping vehicle into one of the stalls. In the adjoining one is a large, dust-covered Isotta-Fraschini propped up on blocks. He closes the garage door and walks up the driveway. In idle curiosity he mounts a stone staircase which leads to the garden.

CAMERA IN BACK OF HIM. At the top of the steps he sees the somber pile of

NORMA DESMOND'S HOUSE

It is a grandiose -- Italianate structure, mottled by the years, gloomy, forsaken, little formal garden completely gone to seed.

From somewhere above comes

GILLIS' VOICE

It was a great big white elephant of a place. The kind crazy movie people built in the crazy Twenties. A neglected house gets an unhappy look. This one had it in spades. It was like that old woman in Great Expectations -- that Miss Haversham in her rotting wedding dress and her torn veil, taking it out on the world because she'd been given the go-by.

A WOMAN'S VOICE

You there!

Gillls turns and looks.
Behind a bamboo blind there is a movement of a dark figure.

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

Why are you so late? Why have you kept me waiting so long?

**A-29 GILLIS**

He stands flabbergasted. A new noise attracts his attention -- the creak of a heavy metal-and-glass door being opened. He turns and sees

**A-30 THE ENTRANCE DOOR OF THE HOUSE**

Max von Mayerling stands there. He is sixty, and all in black, except for immaculate white cotton gloves, shirt, high, stiff collar and a white bow tie. His coat is shiny black alpaca, his trousers ledger-striped. He is semi-paralyzed. The left side of his mouth is pulled down, and he leans on a rubber-ferruled stick.

**MAX**

In here!

Gillis enters the shot.

**GILLIS**

I just put my car in the garage.
I had a blow-out. I thought --

**MAX**

Go on in.

There is authority in the gesture of his white-gloved hand as he motions Gillis inside.

**GILLIS**

Look, maybe I'd better take my car --

**MAX**

Wipe your feet!

Automatically, Gillis wipes his feet on an enormous shabby cocoanut mat.

**MAX**

You are not dressed properly.
GILLIS
Dressed for what?

THE WOMAN’S VOICE
Max! Have him come up, Max!

MAX
(Gesturing)
Up the stairs!

GILLIS
Suppose you listen just for a minute -

MAX
Madame is waiting.

GILLIS
For me? Okay.

Gillis enters.

A-31 INT. NORMA DESMOND'S ENTRANCE HALL

It is grandiose and grim. The whole place is one of those abortions of silent-picture days, with bowling alleys in the cellar and a built-in pipe organ, and beams imported from Italy, with California termites at work on them. Portieres are drawn before all the windows, and only thin slits or sunlight find their way in to fight the few electric bulbs which are always burning.

Gillis starts up the curve of the black marble staircase. It has a wrought-iron rail and a worn velvet rope along the wall.

MAX
(From below)
If you need help with the coffin call me.

The oddity of the situation has caught Gillis' imagination. He climbs the stairs with a kind of morbid fascination. At the top he stops, undecided, then turns to the right and is stopped by

WOMAN'S VOICE
This way!

Gillis swings around.

Norma Desmond stands down the corridor next to a doorway from which emerges a flickering light. She is a little woman. There is a curious style, a great sense of high voltage about her. She is dressed in black house pyjamas and black high-heeled pumps. Around her throat there is a leopard-patterned scarf, and wound around her head a turban of the same material. Her skin is very pale, and she is wearing dark glasses.

NORMA
In here. I put him on my massage table in front of the fire. He always liked fires and poking at them with a stick.

Gillis enters the SHOT and she leads him into

A-32 NORMA DESMOND'S BEDROOM

It is a huge, gloomy room hung in white brocade which has become dirty over the years and even slightly torn in a few places. There's a great, unmade gilded bed in the shape of a swan, from which the gold had begun to peel. There is a disorder of clothes and negligees and faded photographs of old-time stars about.

In an imitation baroque fireplace some logs are burning. On the massage table before it lies a small form shrouded under a Spanish shawl. At each end on a baroque pedestal stands a three-branched candelabrum, the candles lighted.

NORMA
I've made up my mind we'll bury him in the garden. Any city laws against that?

GILLIS
I wouldn't know.

NORMA
I don't care anyway. I want the coffin to be white. And I want it specially lined with satin. White, or deep pink.
She picks up the shawl to make up her mind about the color. From under the shawl flops down a dead arm. Gillis stares and recoils a little. It is like a child's arm, only black and hairy.

**NORMA**

Maybe red. bright flaming red.
Gay. Let's make it gay.

Gillis edges closer and glances down. Under the shawl he sees the sad, bearded face of a dead chimpanzee. Norma drops back the shawl.

**NORMA**

How much will it be? I warn you - don't give me a fancy price just because I'm rich.

**GILLIS**

Lady. you've got the wrong man.

For the first time. Norma really looks at him through her dark glasses.

**GILLIS**

I had some trouble with my car.
Flat tire. I pulled into your garage till I could get a spare.
I thought this was an empty house.

**NORMA**

It is not. Get out.

**GILLIS**

I'm sorry, and I'm sorry you lost your friend, and I don't think red is the right color.

**NORMA**

Get out.

**GILLIS**

Sure. Wait a minute -- haven't I seen you -- ?

**NORMA**

Or shall I call my servant?

**GILLIS**

I know your face. You're Norma
Desmond. You used to be in pictures. You used to be big.

NORMA
I am big. It's the pictures that got small.

GILLIS
I knew there was something wrong with them.

NORMA
They're dead. They're finished. There was a time when this business had the eyes of the whole wide world. But that wasn't good enough. Oh, no! They wanted the ears of the world, too. So they opened their big mouths, and out came talk, talk, talk...

GILLIS
That's where the popcorn business comes in. You buy yourself a bag and plug up your ears.

NORMA
Look at them in the front offices -- the master minds! They took the idols and smashed them. The Fairbankses and the Chaplins and the Gilberts and the Valentinos. And who have they got now? Some nobodies -- a lot of pale little frogs croaking pish-posh!

GILLIS
Don't get sore at me. I'm not an executive. I'm just a writer.

NORMA
You are! Writing words, words! You've made a rope of words and strangled this business! But there is a microphone right there to catch the last gurgles, and Technicolor to photograph the red, swollen tongue!

GILLIS
Ssh! You'll wake up that monkey.
NORMA
Get out!

Gillis starts down the stairs.

GILLIS
Next time I'll bring my autograph album along, or maybe a hunk of cement and ask for your footprints.

He is halfway down the staircase when he is stopped by

NORMA
Just a minute, you!

GILLIS
Yeah?

NORMA
You're a writer, you said.

GILLIS
Why?

Norma starts down the stairs.

NORMA
Are you or aren't you?

GILLIS
I think that's what it says on my driver's license.

NORMA
And you have written pictures, haven't you?

GILLIS
Sure have. The last one I wrote was about cattle rustlers. Before they were through with it, the whole thing played on a torpedo boat.

Norma has reached him at the bottom of the staircase.

NORMA
I want to ask you something. Come in here.
She leads him into

THE HUGE LIVING ROOM

It is dark and damp and filled with black oak and red velvet furniture which looks like crappy props from the Mark of Zorro set. Along the main wall, a gigantic fireplace has been freezing for years. On the gold piano is a galaxy of photographs of Norma Desmond in her various roles. On one wall is a painting -- a California Gold Rush scene, Carthay Circle school. (We will learn later that it hides a motion picture screen.)

One corner is filled with a large pipe organ, and as Norma and Gillis enter, there is a grizzly moaning sound. Gillis looks around.

NORMA
The wind gets in that blasted pipe organ. I ought to have it taken out.

GILLIS
Or teach it a better tune.

Norma has led him to the card tables which stand side by side near a window. They are piled high with papers scrawled in a large, uncertain hand.

NORMA
How long is a movie script these days? I mean, how many pages?

GILLIS
Depends on what it is -- a Donald Duck or Joan or Arc.

NORMA
This is to be a very important picture. I have written it myself. Took me years.

GILLIS
(Looking at the piles of script)
Looks like enough for six important pictures.

NORMA
It's the story or Salome. I
think I'll have DeMille direct it.

GILLIS

Uh-huh.

NORMA

We've made a lot of pictures together.

GILLIS

And you'll play Salome?

NORMA

Who else?

GILLIS

Only asking. I didn't know you were planning a comeback.

NORMA

I hate that word. It is a return. A return to the millions of people who have never forgiven me for deserting the screen.

GILLIS

Fair enough.

NORMA

Salome -- what a woman! What a part! The Princess in love with a Holy man. She dances the Dance of the Seven Veils. He rejects her, so she demands his head on a golden tray, kissing his cold, dead lips.

GILLIS

They'll love it in Pomona.

NORMA

(Taking it straight)

They will love it every place.

(Shes reaches for a batch of pages from the heap)

Read it. Read the scene just before she has him killed!

GILLIS

Right now? Never let another
writer read your stuff. He
may steal it.

NORMA
I am not afraid. Read it!

NORMA (Cont'd)
(Calling)
Max! Max!
(To Gillis)
Sit down. Is there enough light?

GILLIS
I've got twenty-twenty vision.

Max has entered.

NORMA
Bring something to drink.

MAX
Yes. Madame.

He leaves. Norma turns to Gillis again.

NORMA
I said sit down.

There is compulsion in her voice.

Gillis looks at her
and starts slowly
reading.

Max comes in, wheeling
a wicker tea wagon on
which are two bottles o
f champagne and two
red Venetian glasses,
a box of zwieback and
a jar of caviar. Norma
sits on her feet. deep
in a chair, a gold ring
on her forefinger with
a clip which holds a
cigarette. She gets up
and forces on Gillis
another batch of script,
goes back to her chair.

GILLIS' VOICE
Well. I had no pressing
engagement, and she'd men-
tioned something to drink..
Sometimes it's interesting
to see just how bad bad
writing can be. This prom-
ised to go the limit. I
wondered what a handwriting
expert would make of that
childish scrawl of hers.
Max wheeled in some champagne
and some caviar. Later, I
found out that Max was the
only other person in that
grim Sunset castle, and I
found out a few other things
about him... As for her, she
sat coiled up like a watch
spring, her cigarette
clamped in a curious holder...
I could sense her eyes on me
from behind those dark
glasses, defying me not to
like what I read, or maybe
begging me in her own proud
way to like it. It meant
so much to her...

A-34  SHOT OF THE
      GILLIS' VOICE
      CEILING

It sure was a cozy set-up.
That bundle of raw nerves, and
Max, and a dead monkey upstairs
and the wind wheezing through
that organ once in a while.
Later on, just for comedy
relief, the real guy arrived
with a baby coffin. It was
all done with great dignity.
He must have been a very
important chimp. The great
grandson of King Kong, maybe.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-35  GILLIS
reading. The lamp
beside him is now
really paying its
way in the dark room.
A lot of the manu-
script pages are
piled on the floor
around his feet. A
half-empty champagne
glass stands on the
arm of his chair.

It got to be eleven. I was
feeling a little sick at my
stomach, what with that sweet
champagne and that tripe I'd
been reading -- that silly
hodgepodge of melodramatic
plots. However, by then I'd
started concocting a little
plot of my own...

THE CAMERA SLOWLY DRAWS BACK to include Norma
Desmond sitting in the dusk, just as she was before.
Gillis puts down a batch of script. There is a
little pause.

NORMA
(Impatiently)
Well?

GILLIS
This is fascinating.
NORMA
Of course it is.

GILLIS
Maybe it's a little long and maybe there are some repetitions... but you're not a professional writer.

NORMA
I wrote that with my heart.

GILLIS
Sure you did. That's what makes it great. What it needs is a little more dialogue.

NORMA
What for? I can say anything I want with my eyes.

GILLIS
It certainly could use a pair of shears and a blue pencil.

NORMA
I will not have it butchered.

GILLIS
Of course not. But it ought to be organized. Just an editing job. You can find somebody.

NORMA
Who? I'd have to have somebody I can trust. When were you born -- I mean, what sign of the zodiac?

GILLIS
I don't know.

NORMA
What month?

GILLIS
December twenty-first.

NORMA
Sagittarius. I like Sagittarians. You can trust them.
GILLIS
Thank you.

NORMA
I want you to do this work.

GILLIS
Me? I'm busy. Just finished one script. I'm due on another assignment.

NORMA
I don't care.

GILLIS
You know, I'm pretty expensive. I get five hundred a week.

NORMA
I wouldn't worry about money. I'll make it worth your while.

GILLIS
Maybe I'd better take the rest of the script home and read it -

NORMA
Oh no. I couldn't let it out of my house. You'll have to finish it here.

GILLIS
It's getting kind of late --

NORMA
Are you married, Mr. --?

GILLIS
The name is Gillis. I'm single.

NORMA
Where do you live?

GILLIS

NORMA
There's something wrong with your car, you said.
GILLIS
There sure is.

NORMA
You can stay here.

GILLIS
I'll come early tomorrow.

Norma takes off her glasses.

NORMA
Nonsense. There's room over the garage. Max will take you there...Max!

THE CAMERA MOVES TOWARD NORMA'S FACE, right up to her eyes.

GILLIS' VOICE
She sure could say a lot of things with those pale eyes of hers. They'd been her trade mark. They'd made her the Number One Vamp of another era. I remember a rather florid description in an old fan magazine which said: "Her eyes are like two moonlit waterholes, where strange animals come to drink."

DISSOLVE TO:

A-36 SMALL STAIRCASE, LEADING TO ROOM OVER GARAGE

GILLIS' VOICE
I felt kind of pleased with the way I'd handled the situation. I'd dropped the hook, and she'd snapped at it. Now my car would be safe down below, while I did a patch-up job on the script. And there should be plenty of money in it...

Max pushes open a door at the top of the stairs.

MAX
(Opening the door)
I made your bed this afternoon.

GILLIS
Thanks.
(On second thought)
How did you know I was going to
stay, this afternoon?

Max doesn't answer. He walks across to the bed, screws a bulb in the open socket above it. The light goes on, revealing:

**A-37  A GABLED BEDROOM**

There are dirty windows on two sides, and dingy wallpaper on the cracked plaster walls. For furniture there is a neatly made bed, a table and a few chairs which might have been discarded from the main house.

**MAX**

This room has not been used for a long time.

**GILLIS**

It will never make house Beautiful. I guess it's O.K. for one night.

Max gives him an enigmatic look.

**MAX**

(Pointing)
There is the bathroom. I put in soap and a toothbrush.

**GILLIS**

Thanks.
(He starts taking off his coat)
Say, she's quite a character, that Norma Desmond.

**MAX**

She was the greatest. You wouldn't know. You are too young. In one week she got seventeen thousand fan letters. Men would bribe her manicurist to get clippings from her fingernails. There was a Maharajah who came all the way from Hyderabad to get one of her stockings. Later, he strangled himself with it.

**GILLIS**

I sure turned into an interesting driveway.

**MAX**

You did, sir.
He goes out. Gillis looks after him, hangs his coat over a chair, walks over to the window, pulls down the rickety Venetian blind. As he does so, he looks down at:

**GILLIS' VOICE**
I pegged him as slightly cuckoo, too. A stroke maybe. Come to think of it, the whole place seemed to have been stricken with a kind of creeping paralysis, out of beat with the rest of the world, crumbling apart in slow motion ...

---

**A-38 THE TENNIS COURT OF THE DESMOND HOUSE (MOONLIGHT)**

The cement surface is cracked in many places, and weeds are growing high.

**GILLIS' VOICE**
There was a tennis court, or rather the ghost of a tennis court, with faded markings and sagging net ...

---

**A-39 GILLIS - IN THE WINDOW**

He looks away from the court to:

---

**A-40 THE DESMOND SWIMMING POOL**

There is no water in it, and hunks of mosaic which lines its enormous basin are broken away.

**GILLIS' VOICE**
And of course she had a pool. Who didn't then? Mabel Norm- and and John Gilbert must have swum in it ten thousand midnights ago, and Vilma Banky and Rod La Roque. It was empty now...or was it?

---

**A-41 GILLIS - IN THE WINDOW**

He stares down, his stomach slowly turning.

---

**A-42 THE SWIMMING POOL**

At the bottom of the basin a great rat is eating a decaying or,ange. From the inlet pipe crawl two other rats, who join battle with the first rat over the orange.
A-43 GILLIS - IN THE WINDOW

He starts away, but something attracts his attention. He turns back and looks down again.

GILLIS' VOICE
There was something else going on below: the last rites for that hairy old chimp, performed with the utmost seriousness -- as if she were laying to rest an only child. Was her life really as empty as that?

A-44 THE LAWN BELOW

Norma Desmond and Max are carrying the white coffin towards a small grave as which has been dug in the dead turf. Norma carries one of the candelabra, all of its candles flickering in the wind. They reach the grave and lower the coffin into it. Then, Norma lighting his task with the candelabrum, Max takes a spade from the loose earth and starts filling in the grave.

GILLIS' VOICE
It was all very queer, but queerer things were yet to come.

A-45 GILLIS - IN THE WINDOW

He watches the scene below, then turns into the room, goes to the door to lock it. There is no key, and only a hole where the lock has been gouged out. Gillis moves a heavy overstuffed chair in front of the door, then walks towards the bed, throws himself on it, picking up some of the manuscript pages to read.

DISSOLVE

END OF SEQUENCE "A"

SEQUENCE "B"

DISSOLVE IN ON:

B-1 LONG SHOT THE DESMOND HOUSE - (MORNING)
The day is overcast. The house is shrouded in low fog.

SOUND: (Distant organ music – improvisations on an odd, mournful theme – not too loud, continuing throughout the scene.)

**B-2** THE TENNIS COURT, blurred over with fog.

**B-3** THE EMPTY SWIMMING POOL
Its dark outline even more melancholy under the misty blanket.

**B-4** THE ROOM OVER THE GARAGE

Muted daylight seeps through the blinds. Gillis lies on the bed, under a shabby quilt. The manuscript is beside him, some of the pages scattered on the floor. He is just opening his eyes. It takes him a moment to adjust himself to the strange surroundings. His eyes, wandering about the room, suddenly stop, startled. He lifts himself on one elbow and stares at –

GILLIS' VOICE

That night I'd had a mixed-up dream. In it was an organ grinder. I couldn't see his face, but the organ was all draped in black, and a chimp was dancing for pennies. When I opened my eyes, the music was still there... Where was I?

**B-5** THE DOOR

The heavy chair he had set against it the night before has been pushed back. The door is wide ajar.

Oh yes, in that empty room over her garage. Only it wasn't empty any more. Somebody had brought in all my belongings – my books, my typewriter, my clothes...

**B-6** GILLIS

He jumps out of bed. He wears, shirt, trousers and socks. Suddenly he realizes that all his possessions have been brought in. In the closet hang his

GILLIS' VOICE

What was going on?
shirts. His books and typewriter are neatly arranged on the table. His phonograph-radio combination is all installed. Gillis looks around startled, then sits down and starts putting on his moccasins hastily.

Dissolve to:

B-7 A pair of hands in white gloves, playing the organ

Pull back: They belong to Max von Mayerling. He is sitting erect, his bull neck taut as a wrestler's as he rights out somber chord after somber chord. He sits in a shaft of gray light coming from an open French window.

Through the far archway, Gillis storms into the big room.

GILLIS

Hey, you -- Max -- whatever -your-name-is -- what are my things doing here?

No answer.

GILLIS

I'm talking to you. My clothes and things are up in the room.

MAX

Naturally. I brought them myself.

GILLIS

(Furiously)

Is that so!

MAX

Why are you so upset? Is there anything missing?

GILLIS

Who said you could? Who asked you to?

Norma Desmond's shadow moves into the shaft of light.
NORMA'S VOICE

I did.

Gillis looks around.

On the couch by the fireplace reclines Norma Desmond, dressed in a negligee. She rises.

NORMA

I don't know why you should be so upset. Stop that playing, Max.

(To Gillis again)

It seemed like a good idea -- if we are to work together.

GILLIS

Look, I'm supposed to fix up your script. There's nothing in the deal about my staying here.

NORMA

You'll like it here.

GILLIS

Thanks for the invitation, but I have my own apartment.

NORMA

You can't work in an apartment where you owe three months' rent.

GILLIS

I'll take care of that.

NORMA

It's all taken care of. It's all paid for.

GILLIS

I'm used to paying my own bills.

NORMA

You proud boy, why didn't you tell me you were having difficulties.

GILLIS

Okay. We'll deduct it from my salary.
NORMA
Now, now, don't let's be small
about such matters. We won't
keep books.
(To Max)
Go on, unpack Mr. Gillis' things.

GILLIS
Unpack nothing. I didn't say
I was staying.

NORMA
(Her glasses off again)
Suppose you make up your mind.
Do you want this job or don't you?

DISSOLVE TO:

B-8 BIG ROOM, NORMA DESMOND'S
HOUSE - (DAY) GILLIS' VOICE

Gillis sits at an improvised table, his typewriter
in front of him, working hard at the manuscript.
Pencils, shears and a paste-pot at hand.

Facing him at some distance sits Norma, dressed
in another version of her favorite lounging pajamas,
the cigarette contraption on her finger. She is
autographing large photographs of herself and put-
ting them in envelopes.

Gillis takes two or three pages from Norma's hand-
written script, crosses them out and puts them to
one side.

Norma rises, crosses towards Gillis, looks over his
shoulder.

NORMA
What's that?
GILLIS
Just a scene I cut out.

NORMA
What scene?

GILLIS
The one where you go to the slave market. You can cut right to the scene where John the Baptist -

NORMA
Cut away from me?

GILLIS
Honestly, it's a little old hat. They don't want that any more.

NORMA
They don't? Then why do they still write me fan letters every day. Why do they beg me for my photographs? Because they want to see me, me, me! Norma Desmond.

GILLIS
(Resigned)
Okay.

He pulls the page from his typewriter. As he does so he glances over towards Norma.

GILLIS' VOICE
I didn't argue with her. You don't yell at a sleepwalker-- he may fall and break his neck. That's it -- she was still sleepwalking along the giddy heights of a lost career -- plain crazy when it came to that one subject: her celluloid self, the great Norma Desmond. How could she breathe in that house, so crowded with Norma Desmonds? More Norma Desmond and still more Norma Desmond.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-9 THE BIG ROOM - (NIGHT)

GILLIS' VOICE
Shooting towards the big
Gold Rush painting. Max, course. Two or three white gloves and all, times a week Max would steps into the shot, shoves haul up that enormous oil the painting up towards painting that had been the ceiling, revealing a presented to her by some motion picture screen. Nevada Chamber of Com- Max exits.

B-10 NORMA AND GILLIS

They sit on a couch, facing the screen. On a table in front of them are champagne, cigarettes and coffee. Above their heads are the typical openings for a projector. The lights go off. From the opening above their heads shoots the wide beam of light.

B-11 MAX, IN THE PROJECTION BOOTH BEHIND THE ROOM

They were silent movies, and Max would run the projection machine, which was just as well -- it kept him from giving us an accompaniment on that wheezing organ.

B-12 NORMA AND GILLIS

watching the screen. GILLIS' VOICE

"So much nicer than going out," she'd say. The plain fact was that she was afraid of that world outside. Afraid it would remind her that time had passed.

She'd sit very close to me, and she'd smell of tuberoses, which is not my favorite perfume, not by a long shot. Sometimes as we watched, she'd clench my arm or my hand forgetting she was my employer becoming just a fan, excited about that actress up there on the screen....I guess I don't have to tell you who the star was. They were always her pictures -- that's all she wanted to see.
both watch the screen.

**B-13 THE OTHER END OF THE BIG ROOM. WITH THE SCREEN**

On it flickers a famous scene from one of Norma's old silent pictures. It is not to be a funny scene. It is old-fashioned, but shows her incredible beauty and the screen presence which made her the great star of her day.

**B-14 NORMA AND GILLIS ON THE COUCH**

*NORMA*

Still wonderful, isn't it? And no dialogue. We didn't need dialogue. We had faces. There just aren't any faces like that any more. Well, maybe one -- Garbo.

In a sudden flareup she jumps to her feet and stands in the flickering beam of light.

*NORMA*

Those idiot producers! Those imbeciles! Haven't they got any eyes? Have they forgotten what a star looks like? I'll show them. I'll be up there again. So help me!

**DISOLVE TO:**

**B-15 THE BIG ROOM - (NIGHT)**

It is apparently empty.  
The elaborate lamps make pools of light.

*GILLIS' VOICE*

Sometimes there'd be a little bridge game in the house, at a twentieth-of-a cent a point. I'd get half her winnings. Once they ran up to seventy cents, which was about the only cash money I ever got. The others around the table would be actor friends - dim figures you may still remember from the silent days. I used to think of them as her Wax Works.

Beside Norma sits Gillis, kibitzing on a game which bores him.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK AND PANS to reveal a card table around which sit Norma and three friends - three actors of her period. They sit erect and play with grim seriousness.

*GILLIS' VOICE*

But there's nothing in it. Nothing amusing about it.
extremely. An ashtray on the card table is full and Norma holds it out for Gillis to take away. He crosses the room to the fireplace. But his eyes fall on the entrance door and he stops.

**B-16  THE ENTRANCE HALL - (FROM GILLIS' POINT OF VIEW)**

Max stands in the open door. Outside are the two men who came to the apartment for Gillis' car.

**B-17  GILLIS**

He steps back so that he cannot be seen from the door. A second later Max appears, looking for him.

**MAX**
(Quietly)
Some men are here. They asked for you.

**GILLIS**
I'm not here.

**MAX**
That's what I told them.

**GILLIS**
Good.

**MAX**
They found your car in the garage. They are going to tow it away.

Gillis doesn't know what to do. From offstage comes:

**NORMA'S VOICE**
The ashtray, Joe dear! Can we have the ashtray?

Gillis dumps the cigarette butts into the cold fireplace, crosses to the bridge table, puts the ashtray down, leans over and speaks into Norma's ear.

**GILLIS**
I want to talk to you for a minute.

NORMA
Not now, my dear. I'm playing three no trump.

GILLIS
They've come for my car.

NORMA
Please. Now I've forgotten how many spades are out.

GILLIS
I need some money right now.

NORMA
Can't you wait till I'm dummy?

3.22.49

GILLIS
No.

NORMA
(Angry by now)
Please!

Gillis stands frustrated, hideously embarrassed by the stares of the waxworks. He turns away and hurries to the door.

B-18 ENTRANCE DOOR TO THE HOUSE

It is half open. Gillis comes into the shot and, taking cover, looks out.

B-19 COURTYARD (FROM GILLIS' ANGLE)

The men from the finance company are cranking up the car. Max stands watching silently. When they finish the cranking job, the men climb into the front seat of the truck.

B-20 GILLIS - AT THE DOOR

Over the shot the SOUND of the truck being started and the cars moving away. Gillis moves out into the courtyard and stands staring after the car. From the house comes Norma.
NORMA
Now what is it? Where's the fire?

GILLIS
I've lost my car.

NORMA
Oh...and I thought it was a matter of life and death.

GILLIS
It is to me. That's why I came to this house. That's why I took this job -- ghost writing!

NORMA
Now you're being silly. We don't need two cars. We have a car. And not one of those cheap new things made of chromium and spit. An Isotta-Fraschini. Have you ever heard of Isotta-Fraschinis? All hand-made. Cost me twenty-eight thousand dollars.

THE CAMERA HAS PANNED over to the garage and FOCUSES on the dirty Isotta-Fraschini on its blocks.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-21  NORMA'S ISOTTA-FRASCHINI
DRIVING IN THE HILLS
ABOVE SUNSET (DAY)

Max is at the wheel, dressed as usual except for a chauffeur's cap. GILLIS' VOICE
So Max got that old bus down off its blocks and polished it up. She'd take me for rides in the hills above Sunset.

B-22  INSIDE THE CAR

Gillis sits beside Norma, who is wearing a smart tailleur and her eternal sun glasses. Gillis wears his sport jacket-flannel trousers-moccasin combination. The whole thing was upholstered in leopard skin, and had one of those car phones, all gold-plated.
He sits uncomfortably. Norma is studying him.

**NORMA**
That's a dreadful shirt you're wearing.

**GILLIS**
What's wrong with it?

**NORMA**
Nothing, if you work in a filling station. And I'm getting rather bored with that sport jacket, and those same baggy pants.

(She picks up the car phone)
Max, what's a good men's shop in town? The very best... Well, go there!

**GILLIS**
I don't need any clothes, and I certainly don't want you buying them for --

**NORMA**
Why begrudge me a little fun? I just want you to look nice, my stray little boy.

By this time Max has made a U-turn.

**QUICK DISSOLVE TO:**

**B-23 INT. MEN'S DEPARTMENT, AN ELEGANT WILSHIRE STORE**

Gillis stands in front of a full-length triple mirror, surrounded by a couple of salesmen and the tailor, who is busily working out alterations.

Gillis wears a double-breasted gray flannel coat with chalk stripes. His trousers belong to another suit of glen plaid. Norma is running the show.

**NORMA**
There's nothing like gray flannel with a chalk stripe.

(she points at the trousers)
This one single-breasted, of course.
(to another salesman)
Now we need a topcoat. Let's see what you have in camel's hair.

The salesman leaves.

NORMA
How about some evening clothes?

GILLIS
I don't need a tuxedo.

NORMA
Of course you do. A tuxedo and tails.

GILLIS
Tails. That's ridiculous.

NORMA
You'll need them for parties. You'll need them for New Year's Eve.
(to a salesman)
Where are your evening clothes?

SALESMAN
This way, Madame.

He leads her off. The other salesman arrives with a selection of topcoats.

SALESMAN
Here are some camel hairs, but I'd like you just to feel this one. It's Vicuna. Of course, it's a little more expensive.

GILLIS
A camel's hair will do.

SALESMAN
(With an insulting inflection)
As long as the lady is paying for it, why not take the Vicuna?

DISSOLVE:
END OF SEQUENCE "B"

SEQUENCE "C"

DISSOLVE IN:

C-1  LONG SHOT DESMOND HOUSE

A day in December. Rain.

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

C-2  INT. ROOM OVER GARAGE

Water is drizzling from two or three spots in the ceiling into pans and bowls set to catch it, GILLIS' VOICE one bowl right on the bed. The room is almost emptied of Gillis' belongings by now. Max is carrying out a hand-full of new suits on hangers. He has a dressing gown over his shoulder. Gillis holds a stack of shirts, his typewriter, and some manuscript. He surveys the room for the last time, to see whether he's forgotten anything. He has. He puts down the typewriter and picks up from under the bed a pair of very smart red leather bedroom slippers. He tucks them under his arm, picks up the typewriter and leaves.

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

C-3  A BEDROOM IN THE MAIN HOUSE

It is obviously a man's room -- heavy Spanish furniture -- one wall nothing but a closet with shelves and drawers for shirts and shoes. Max is
hanging up the suits. Gillis throws the shirts on a big chair, tosses the slippers at the foot of the bed, places the typewriter and manuscript on a desk at the window.

**GILLIS**
Whose room was this?

**MAX**
It was the room of the husband. 
Or of the husbands, I should say. Madame has been married three times.

Slightly embarrassed, Gillis picks up his toilet kit with razor, toothbrushes, soap, etc., and starts towards the bathroom, pausing en route at a rain-splattered window.

**GILLIS**
I guess this is the one you can see Catalina from. Only this isn't the day.

He proceeds towards the half-opened door leading to the bathroom. Something strikes his attention and he stops. As in the door to the room above the garage, this lock, too, has been gouged out.

**GILLIS**
Hey, what's this with the door? There isn't any lock.

**MAX**
There are no locks anywhere in this house.

He points to the entrance door of the room, and to another door.

**GILLIS**
How come?

**MAX**
The doctor suggested it.

**GILLIS**
What doctor?

**MAX**
Madame's doctor. She has moments of melancholy. There have been
some suicide attempts.

GILLIS
Uh-huh?

MAX
We have to be very careful. No sleeping pills, no razor blades. We shut off the gas in her bedroom.

GILLIS
Why? Her career? She got enough out of it. She's not forgotten. She still gets those fan letters.

MAX
I wouldn't look too closely at the postmarks.

GILLIS
You send them. Is that it, Max?

MAX
I'd better press your evening clothes, sir. You have not forgotten Madame's New Year's party.

GILLIS
No, I haven't. I suppose all the waxworks are coming?

MAX
I don't know, sir. Madame made the arrangements.

Max leaves. Gillis comes out of the bathroom, picks up his shirts, goes over to a closet, opens it. As he does so one of the doors without a lock swings slightly open. Gillis looks through the half-open door and sees.

C-4 NORMA DESMOND'S ROOM

It is empty. The rainy day does nothing to help its gloom.

GILLIS' VOICE
There it was again - that room of hers, all satin and ruffles, and that bed like a gilded rowboat. The perfect setting for a silent movie queen. Poor devil,
He pushes the door shut and walks back into the room.

DISSOLVE TO:

C-5

STAIRCASE OF DESMOND HOUSE (NIGHT)

Gillis is coming down the stairs in his tailcoat adjusting the handkerchief in his pocket. He obviously feels a little uneasy in this outfit. From below comes a tango of the Twenties, played by a small orchestra. Gillis stops in the archway leading to the big room and looks around.

GILLIS' VOICE

It was at her New Year's party that I found out how she felt about me. Maybe I'd been an idiot not to have sensed it was coming - that sad, embarrassing revelation.

C-6

THE BIG ROOM has been decorated for the occasion with laurel garlands. Dozens of candles in all the sconces and candelabra are ablaze. Their flickering flames are reflected in the waxed surface of the tile floor. There is a buffet, with buckets of champagne and caviar on ice. In one corner on a little platform banked with palms, a four-piece orchestra is playing.

At the buffet are Max and Norma. She is drinking a glass of champagne. She is wearing a diamante evening dress, very high style, with long black gloves and a headdress of paradise feathers. Her eyes fall on Gillis. She puts down the glass of champagne. picks up a gardenia boutonniere and moves toward him.

NORMA

Joe, you look absolutely divine. Turn around!
GILLIS
(Embarrassed)
Please.

NORMA
Come on!

Gillis makes a slow 360-degree turn.

NORMA
Perfect. Wonderful shoulders. And I love that line.

She indicates the V from his shoulders to his hips.

GILLIS
All padding. Don't let it fool you.

NORMA
Come here!

She puts the gardenia on his lapel.

GILLIS
You know, to me dressing up was always just putting on my dark blue suit.

NORMA
I don't like those studs they've sent. I want you to have pearls. Nice big pearls.

GILLIS
Now, I'm not going to wear earrings, I can tell you that.

NORMA
Cute. Let's have some drinks.

She leads him over to the buffet.

GILLIS
Shouldn't we wait for the others?

NORMA
(Pointing at the floor)
Careful, it's slippery. I had it waxed.
They reach the buffet. Max is ready with two glasses of champagne. Norma hands Gillis a glass.

NORMA
Here's to us.

They drink.

NORMA
You know, this floor used to be wood but I had it changed. Valentino said there is nothing like tiles for a tango.

She opens her arms.

GILLIS
Not on the same floor with Valentino!

NORMA
Just follow me.

They start to tango. After a moment --

NORMA
Don't bend back like that.

GILLIS
It's those feathers. They tickle.

Norma pulls the paradise feathers from her hair and tosses them away.

C-7 THE ORCHESTRA

As they play the tango, the musicians eye the dancing couple, take in the situation, exchange glances and turn away with professional discretion.

C-8 NORMA AND GILLIS, TANGOING

Gillis glances at his wrist watch.

GILLIS
It's a quarter past ten. What time are they supposed to get
here?

NORMA
Who?

GILLIS
The other guests?

NORMA
There are no other guests. We don't want to share this night with other people. This is for you and me.

GILLIS
I understand some rich guy bought up all the tickets for a performance at the Metropolitan and sat there listening to La Traviata, all by himself. He was afraid of catching cold.

NORMA
Hold me tighter.

GILLIS
Come midnight, how about blindfolding the orchestra and smashing champagne glasses on Max's head?

NORMA
You think this is all very funny.

GILLIS
A little.

NORMA
Is it funny that I'm in love with you?

GILLIS
What's that?

NORMA
I'm in love with you. Don't you know that? I've been in love with you all along.

They dance on. Gillis is acutely embarrassed.
THE CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK, PANS past the faces
of the musicians, who play on with a rather overemphasized lack of interest. Finally it winds up on Max, behind the buffet. He stands watching Gillis, a faint trace of pity in his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

C-9

NORMA'S FINGER, WITH THE
CIGARETTE GADGET, as she
goes to insert a cigarette.

GILLIS' VOICE
I'm sure a lot of you will laugh about this. Ridiculous situation, wasn't it? -- a woman almost twice my age ... It got to be about a quarter of eleven. I felt caught, like a cigarette in the prongs of that contraption on her finger.

PULL BACK TO:

NORMA AND GILLIS sitting on a couch in front of the cavernous fireplace. Norma holds out her cigarette to Gillis, who lights it.

NORMA.
What a wonderful next year it's going to be. What fun we're going to have. I'll fill the pool for you. Or I'll open my house in Malibu, and you can have the whole ocean. Or I'll buy you a boat and we'll sail to Hawaii.

GILLIS
Stop it. You aren't going to buy me anything more.

NORMA
Don't be silly.
(She reaches under a pillow of the couch and brings out a leather box)
Here. I was going to give it to you at midnight.

Gillis opens the box. It contains a matched gold cigarette case and lighter.
Gillis snaps open the case. Engraved inside the cover is: TO JOE FROM NORMA, and two bars of music.

**GILLIS**
What are the notes?

**NORMA**
"Mad about the boy."

**GILLIS**
Norma, I can't take it. You've bought me enough.

**NORMA**
Shut up. I'm rich. I'm richer than all this new Hollywood trash. I've got a million dollars.

**GILLIS**
Keep it.

**NORMA**
I own three blocks downtown. I have oil in Bakersfield -- pumping, pumping, pumping. What's it for but to buy us anything we want.

**GILLIS**
Cut out that us business.

He rises.

**NORMA**
What's the matter with you?

**GILLIS**
What right do you have to take me for granted?

**NORMA**
What right? Do you want me to tell you?

**GILLIS**
Has it ever occurred that I may have a life of my own? That there may be some girl I'm crazy about?
NORMA
Who? Some car hop, or a dress extra?

GILLIS
Why not? What I'm trying to say is that I'm all wrong for you. You want a Valentino -- somebody with polo ponies -- a big shot --

NORMA
(Getting up slowly) What you're trying to say is that you don't want me to love you. Is that it?

Gillis doesn't answer. Norma slaps his face and rushes from the room and upstairs.

Gillis stands paralyzed, the slap burning his cheek.

C-10 THE TOP OF THE STAIRCASE AND CORRIDOR
Norma rushes up the last few steps, down the corridor and into her bedroom, banging the door. MOVE THE CAMERA toward the closed door, centering on the gouged-out lock.

C-11 GILLIS, IN THE BIG ROOM
He still stands motionless. He glances around furtively, to see if his humiliation has been observed.

C-12 THE ORCHESTRA
The musicians are playing away. They have turned their eyes away from Gillis rather too ostentatiously for comfort.

C-13 GILLIS
His eyes move over toward

C-14 MAX
He is subtler than the musicians. He appears very
busy at the buffet, putting empty bottles and used glasses on a tray. He walks across the room with them.

C-15  GILLIS

He starts slowly out. As he does so his long gold key chain catches on a carved ornament of the sofa and holds him for a second of additional embarrassment. He yanks it loose and walks with as much nonchalance as he can muster to

C-16  THE HALL

Crossing towards the coat closet, Gillis throws a look upstairs. Then he pulls the Vicuna coat from its hangar and slips into it as he crosses to the entrance door. He opens the door on the darkness of the courtyard.

C-17  EXT. DESMOND HOUSE
     (NIGHT - RAIN)

Gillis shuts the door.  Gillis'VOICE  I didn't know where I was going. I just had to get out of there. I had to be with people my own age. I had to hear somebody laugh again. I thought of Artie Green. There was bound to be a New Year's shindig going on in his apartment down on Las Palmas -- the hock shop set -- not a job in the room. but lots of

C-18  DRIVEWAY LEADING TO
     fun on the cuff.

Gillis walks to the street, which is dark and empty. He starts down Sunset in an Easterly direction. A car passes. He tries to thumb a ride, without success. However, the second car, a florist's
delivery wagon, stops.
Gillis jumps in and the car drives off.

DISSOLVE TO:

C-19  ARTIE GREEN'S APARTMENT

It is the most modest one-room affair, jam packed with young people flowing over into the miniature bathroom and the microscopic kitchenette. The only drink being served is punch from a pressed-glass bowl -- but everybody is having a hell of a time. Most of the men are in slacks and sweaters, and only a few of the girls in something that vaguely suggests party dress.

Abe Burroughs sits at a small, guest-festooned piano and sings Tokio Rose. By the door, a group of young men and girls respond to the song by singing Rinso White or Dentyne Chewing Gum or something similar, in the manner of a Bach choral. Artie Green, a dark haired, pleasant-looking guy in his late twenties, is conducting with the ladle from the punch bowl.

The door behind some of the singers is pushed open, jostling them out of their places. In comes Gillis, his hair and face wet, the collar of his Vicuna coat turned up. Artie stops conducting, but the commercial goes right on.

ARTIE
Well, what do you know ! Joe Gillis !

GILLIS
Hi, Artie.

ARTIE
Where have you been keeping that gorgeous face of yours?

GILLIS
In a deep freeze.

ARTIE
I almost reported you to the Bureau of Missing Persons.
(To the company)
Fans, you all know Joe Gillis, the well-known screen writer, opium smuggler and Black Dahlia suspect.
Gillis greets some of the kids by name as he and Artie push their way into the room.

**ARTIE**
Give me your coat.

**GILLIS**
Let it ride for a while.

**ARTIE**
You're going to stay, aren't you?

**GILLIS**
That was the general idea.

**ARTIE**
Come on.

Artie starts peeling the coat off Gillis. Its texture takes his breath away.

**ARTIE**
What is this - mink?

He has taken the coat. He looks at Gillis standing there in tails.

**ARTIE**
Judas E. Priest, who did you borrow that from? Adolphe Menjou?

**GILLIS**
Close, but no cigar.

Gillis stands embarrassed while Artie rolls up the Vicuna coat and tucks it above the books on a bookshelf.

**ARTIE**
Say, you're not really smuggling opium these days, are you?

**GILLIS**
Where's the bar?

The two make their way toward the punch bowl. It's a little like running the gauntlet for Gillis. There are whistles and 'stares of astonishment at his tails. When they reach the punch bowl, Artie picks up a half-filled glass and fills it.
GILLIS
Good party.

ARTIE
The greatest. They call me the Elsa Maxwell of the assistant directors.
(To some guests who are dipping their empty cups into the punch bowl)
Hey, easy on the punch bowl. Budget only calls for three drinks per extra. Fake the rest.

GILLIS
Listen, Artie, can I stick around here for a while?

ARTIE
Sure, this'll go on all night.

GILLIS
I mean, could you put me up for a couple of weeks?

ARTIE
It just so happens we have a vacancy on the couch.

GILLIS
I'll take it.

ARTIE
I'll have the bell-hop take care of your luggage.

He runs his finger across the decollete back of a girl standing in a group next them.

ARTIE
Just register here.

The girl turns around. She is Betty Schaefer.

BETTY
Hello, Mr. Gillis.

ARTIE
You know each other?

Gillis looks at her a little puzzled.
BETTY
Let me help you. Betty Schaeter, Sheldrake's office.

GILLIS
Sure. Bases Loaded.

ARTIE
Wait a minute. This is the woman I love. What's going on? Who was loaded?

GILLIS
Don't worry. She's just a fan for my literary output.

BETTY
(to Artie)
Hurt feelings department.

GILLIS
About that luggage. Where's the phone?

ARTIE
Over by the Rainbow Room.

Gillis squeezes his way through groups of people to the telephone, which is next to an open door leading to the bathroom. The phone is busy. A girl sits listening to it, giggling wildly. Another girl beside her is laughing too. They are apparently sharing a conversation with some man on the other end of the wire. The telephone passes from hand to hand. Gillis watches impatiently, then

GILLIS
When you're through with that thing, can I have it?

The girl just nods, going on with her chattering. Gillis stands waiting, and Betty Schaefer comes up with his glass.

BETTY
You forgot this.

GILLIS
Thanks.

BETTY
I've been hoping to run into you.

GILLIS
What for? To recover that knife you stuck in my back?

BETTY
I felt a little guilty, so I got out some of your old stories.

GILLIS
Why, you sweet kid.

BETTY
There's one called...Window...something with a window.

GILLIS
Dark Windows. How did you like it?

BETTY
I didn't.

GILLIS
Thank you.

BETTY
Except for about six pages. You've got a flashback there ...

There is too much racket for her.

BETTY
Is there someplace we can talk?

GILLIS
How about the Rainbow Room?

They squeeze their way towards the bathroom, past Artie.

ARTIE
I said you could have my couch. I didn't say you could have my girl.

BETTY
This is shop talk.

She and Gillis go through the open door into
C-20  ARTIE'S BATHROOM

It's a little less noisy, although there are some guests there, chatting and having fun. Betty and Gillis sit down on the edge of the tub.

GILLIS
Now if I got you correctly, there was a short stretch of my fiction you found worthy of notice.

BETTY
The flashback in the courtroom, when she tells about being a school teacher.

GILLIS
I had a teacher like that once.

BETTY
Maybe that's why it's good. It's true, it's moving. Now why don't you use that character...

GILLIS
Who wants true? Who wants moving?

BETTY
Drop that attitude. Here's something really worth while.

GILLIS
Want me to start right now? Maybe there's some paper around.

BETTY
I'm serious. I've got a few ideas.

GILLIS
I've got some ideas myself. One of them being this is New Year's Eve. How about living it up a little?

BETTY
As for instance?

GILLIS
Well....

BETTY
We could make some paper boats and have a regatta. Or should we just turn on the shower?

**GILLIS**

How about capturing the kitchen and barricading the door?

**BETTY**

Are you hungry?

**GILLIS**

Hungry? After twelve years in the Burmese jungle. I am starving, Lady Agatha -- starving for a white shoulder --

**BETTY**

Phillip, you're mad!

One of the girls who was on the phone comes to the door.

**GIRL**

You can have the phone now.

**GILLIS**

(Paying no attention)

Thirsting for the coolness of your lips -

**BETTY**

No, Phillip, no. We must be strong. You're still wearing the uniform of the Coldstream Guards! Furthermore, you can have the phone now.

**GILLIS**

O.K.

(He gets up, starts out, turns)

I find I'm terribly afraid of losing you.

**BETTY**

You won't.

(She takes the glass out of his hand)

I'll get us a refill of this awful stuff.
GILLIS
You'll be waiting for me?

BETTY
With a wildly beating heart.

GILLIS
Life can be beautiful!

He leaves.

C-21 THE MAIN ROOM

Gillis squeezes himself through some guests to the phone. He has to stand in a cramped position, holding the instrument close to him as he dials a number.

GILLIS
Max? This is Mr. Gillis. I want you to do me a favor.

C-22 NORMA DESMOND HOUSE

Max is at the phone, in the lower hall.

MAX
I am sorry, Mr. Gillis. I cannot talk now.

C-23 GILLIS ON THE PHONE

GILLIS
Yes you can. I want you to get my old suitcase and I want you to throw in my old clothes -- the ones I came with, and my typewriter. I'll have somebody pick them up.

C-24 MAX AT THE PHONE

MAX
I have no time to talk. The doctor is here.

C-25 GILLIS ON THE PHONE
GILLIS
What doctor? What's going on?

C-26 MAX AT THE PHONE

MAX
She got the razor from your room. She cut her wrists.

Max hangs up, moves toward the staircase.

C-27 GILLIS AT THE PHONE

GILLIS
Max! Max!

He hangs up the dead receiver, stands numb with shock. Betty elbows her way up to him, carrying the two punch glasses filled again.

BETTY
I just got the recipe: take two packages of cough drops, dissolve in one gallon of lukewarm grape juice --

Gillis looks up at her. Without a word he pushes her aside so that she spills the drink. He makes his way through the guests to the Vicuna coat, pulls it from the shelf, some books tumbling with it, and rushes towards the door and out. Betty stands looking after him, completely bewildered.

DISSOLVE TO:

C-28 EXT. DESMOND HOUSE - (NIGHT, RAIN)

The doctor's car is parked in the driveway. A taxi pulls up. Gillis, in his Vicuna coat now, jumps out, throws a couple of dollars to the driver and runs toward the house.

C-28a DOORWAY, NORMA DESMOND HOUSE>

Max is opening the door to let out the doctor, a professional looking man carrying a black bag. Gillis runs into the SHOT.
GILLIS
How is she?

MAX
She is upstairs.

Gillis starts to push past Max. Max grabs his arm.

MAX
Be careful. Do not race up the stairs. The musicians must not know what has happened.

Gillis goes into the house.

C-29 ENTRANCE HALL AND STAIRCASE

Gillis crosses the hall and starts up the stairs.

C-30 INT. NORMA DESMOND'S ROOM

Only one alabaster lamp lights the big, cold room. On the bed lies Norma in her evening dress. She is white as a sheet. Her wrists are bandaged. Her eyes are wide open, staring at the ceiling. One of her shoes has half slipped off her foot. The other is on. Gillis opens the door and stands there for a second. Then he slowly moves to the foot of the bed. He takes the shoes from her feet and puts them on the floor.

NORMA
Go away.

GILLIS
What kind of a silly thing was that to do?

NORMA
To fall in love with you -- that was the idiotic thing.

GILLIS
It sure would have made attractive headlines: Great Star Kills Herself for Unknown Writer.

NORMA
Great stars have great pride.
She puts one bandaged forearm over her eyes, sobbing. Gillis walks slowly over to the mantelpiece, stands there for awhile.

NORMA
Go away. Go to that girl of yours.

GILLIS
Look, I was making that up because I thought the whole thing was a mistake. I didn't want to hurt you. You've been good to me. You're the only person in this stinking town that has been good to me.

NORMA
Why don't you just say thank you and go, go, go --

GILLIS
Not until you promise to act like a sensible human being.

NORMA
I'll do it again, I'll do it again, I'll do it again!

Gillis stands looking at her helplessly.

C-31 LIVING ROOM, THE DESMOND HOUSE

The candles burned down, the orchestra playing to the emptiness. The orchestra leader looks at his watch, rises, silences the orchestra, then starts them in on Auld Lang Syne.

C-32 INT. NORMA'S ROOM

Gillis still stands. Norma lies on the bed, arms over her eyes, sobbing.

GILLIS
Happy New Year.

Norma continues to sob. Gillis goes to the bed, puts his arms on her shoulders and turns her around.

GILLIS
Happy New Year.

Norma looks at him, tears in her eyes. Slowly she enfolds him in her bandaged arms.

**NORMA**

Happy New Year. darling.

She kisses him.

**DISSOLVE**

**END OF SEQUENCE "C"**

**SEQUENCE "D"**

**DISSOLVE IN ON:**

**D-1**

**INT. HALLWAY, NORMA**

**GILLIS' VOICE**

DESMOND'S HOUSE (DAY)  Around the middle of May some incidents happened which I think I should tell you about.

The telephone is heard ringing. Max comes from living room to the phone, picks it up.

**MAX**

Hello ... Yes?

**D-1a**

**BETTY SCHAEFER, AT THE PHONE ON HER DESK IN THE READERS' DEPARTMENT**

**BETTY**

Is this Crestview 5-1733? ... I'm sorry to bother you again, but I've confirmed the number. I must speak to Mr. Gillis.

**D-1b**

**MAX, AT THE PHONE**

**MAX**

He is not here.

**D-1c**

**BETTY ON THE PHONE**
BETTY
Where can I reach him? Maybe somebody else in the house could tell me.

D-1d MAX ON THE PHONE

MAX
Nobody here can give you any information. You will please not call again.

He hangs up. From off comes:

NORMA'S VOICE
Who was it, Max? What is it?

D-1e PATIO, NORMA'S HOUSE

It is a sunny day. The garden is in somewhat better shape. The old house looks less unkept. The pool is filled. Norma sits on a wicker chaise longue, her face shielded by an enormous straw hat, her eyes by dark glasses. Gillis, in bathing trunks, is on a rubber mattress in the pool. Max comes to the entrance door.

MAX
Nothing, Madame. Somebody inquiring about a stray dog. We must have a number very similar to the pound.

He starts to turn back.

NORMA
Wait a minute. I want you to get out the car. You're going to take the script over to Paramount and deliver it to Mr. De Mille in person.

MAX
Yes, Madame.

He goes into the house.

GILLIS
(climbing out of the water)
You're really going to send it to De Mille?

NORMA
This is the right day.

She indicates a typewritten letter she is holding.

NORMA (Cont'd)
The chart from my astrologer. She read deMille's horoscope. She read mine.

GILLIS
Did she read the script?

NORMA
DeMille is Leo. I'm Scorpio. Mars has been transmitting Jupiter for weeks. Today is the day of greatest conjunction. Now turn around. Let me dry you.

She puts the towel around his shoulders and starts drying him.

GILLIS
I hope you realize, Norma, that scripts don't sell on astrologers' charts.

NORMA
I'm not just selling the script. I'm selling me. DeMille always said I was his greatest star.

GILLIS
When did he say it, Norma?

NORMA
So he said it quite a few years ago. So what? I never looked better in my life. Do you know why? Because I've never been as happy in my life.

She kisses him.

DISSOLVE TO:
INT. THE ISOTTA, DRIVING DOWN SUNSET ABOUT 8:30 IN THE EVENING

Max is driving. In the tonneau sit Norma, in a chinchilla wrap, and Gillis in his tuxedo. Norma is rummaging through her evening bag. She finds a cigarette case, opens it. It is empty.

NORMA
That idiot. He forgot to fill my cigarette case.

GILLIS
(Proffering his case)
Have one of mine.

NORMA
They're awful. They make me cough.

GILLIS
(Pushing open the glass partition, to Max)
Pull up at the drugstore, will you, Max.
(To Norma)
I'll get you some.

NORMA
You're a darling.

She takes a dollar bill from her purse and gives it to him.

D-3 EXT. SCHWAB'S DRUGSTORE
The car drives up and Gillis hurries into the store.

D-4 INT. SCHWAB'S DRUGSTORE
Business is still rather lively. There are about a dozen shoppers, and the soda counter is half filled. Gillis enters and steps to the tobacco counter.

GILLIS
(To the salesgirl)
Give me a pack of those Turkish
cigarettes -- Melachrinos.

The girl opens the glass showcase to locate the fancy brand. From OFF comes

**ARTIE'S VOICE**

Stick 'em up, Gillis, or I'll let you have it!

Gillis turns.

D-5 **AT THE SODA FOUNTAIN**

Artie Green and Betty Schaefer sit having a sandwich and a milk shake. With his forefinger and a sound effect, Artie riddles Gillis' body. Gillis walks INTO THE SHOT.

**GILLIS**

Hello, Artie. Good evening, Miss Schaefer.

**BETTY**

(Excitedly)

You don't know how glad I am to see you!

**ARTIE**

Walking out on the mob. What's the big idea?

**GILLIS**

I'm sorry about New Year's. Would you believe me if I said I had to be with a sick friend?

**ARTIE**

Someone in the formal set, no doubt, with a ten-carat kidney stone.

**BETTY**

Stop it, Artie, will you? (To Gillis)

Where have you been keeping yourself? I've got the most wonderful news for you.

**GILLIS**

I haven't been keeping myself at all. Not lately.
BETTY
I called your agent. I called the Screen Writers Guild. Finally your old apartment gave me some Crestview number. There was always somebody with an accent growling at me. You were not there. You were not to be spoken to. They never heard of you.

GILLIS
Is that so? What's the wonderful news?

BETTY
Sheldrake likes that angle about the teacher.

GILLIS
What teacher?

BETTY
Dark Windows. I got him all hopped up about it.

GILLIS
You did?

BETTY
He thinks it could be made into something.

GILLIS
Into what? A lampshade?

BETTY
Into something for Barbara Stanwyck. They have a commitment with Barbara Stanwyck.

ARTIE
Unless you'd rather have Sarah Bernhardt.

BETTY
This is on the level. Sheldrake really went for it.

GILLIS
O.K. Where's the cash?

BETTY
Where's the story? I bluffed it out with a few notions of my own. It's really just a springboard. It needs work.

**GILLIS**
I was afraid of that.

**BETTY**
I've got twenty pages of notes. I've got a pretty good character for the man.

**ARTIE**
Could you write in plenty of background action, so they'll need an extra assistant director?

**BETTY**
Shut up, Artie.
(To Gillis)
Now if we could sit down for two weeks and get a story.

**GILLIS**
Sorry, Miss Schaefer, but I've given up writing on spec.

**BETTY**
I tell you this is half sold.

**GILLIS**
As a matter of fact. I've given up writing altogether.

Max has appeared in the door.

**MAX**
Mr. Gillis, if you please.

**GILLIS**
Right with you.

Max leaves.

**ARTIE**
The accent! I've got it: this guy is in the pay of a foreign government. Get those studs. Get those cuff-links.

**GILLIS**
I've got to run along. Thanks any-
way for your interest in my career.

BETTY
It's not your career -- it's mine. I kind of hoped to get in on this deal. I don't want to be a reader all my life. I want to write.

GILLIS
Sorry if I crossed you up.

BETTY
You sure have.

GILLIS
So long.

He leaves.

ARTIE
(Patting her hand)
Babe, it's like that producer says:
In life, you've got to take the bitter with the sour.

D-6  THE ISOTTA, PARKED OUTSIDE

Gillis comes from Schwab's, gets into the car.

Max takes off.

NORMA
What on earth, darling? It took you hours.

GILLIS
I ran into some people I knew.

NORMA
Where are my cigarettes?

GILLIS
Where are your...?

He realizes he's forgotten them, takes the dollar and hands it back to her.

GILLIS
Norma, you're smoking too much.

DISSOLVE TO:
LIVING ROOM, NORMA DESMOND’S HOUSE
(EARLY AFTERNOON)

Start on a tiny parasol being twirled...Norma peeks out from one side of the parasol, a bandanna tied around her head with a rabbit's-ear bow. She bats her eyes, winks roguishly.

GILLIS' VOICE
Whenever she suspected I was getting bored, she would put on a live show for me: the Norma Desmond Follies. Her first number was always the Mack Sennett Bathing Beauty.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal that Norma's black pyjama trousers are rolled up over her knees and her black stockings rolled down below them. The whole effect approximates a Mack Sennett bathing costume pretty effectively. She points at a leather pour.

NORMA
This is a rock.

She climbs on it, pantomimes timidity, an attempted dive, then jumps off.

Gillis lolls on a couch, watching the performance, very bored.

NORMA
I can still see myself in the line: Bebe Daniels, Marie Prevost, Mabel Normand ... Mabel was always stepping on my feet ... What's the matter with you, darling? Why are you so glum?

GILLIS
(Lighting a cigarette with a match)
Nothing is the matter. I'm having a great time. Show me some more.

NORMA
(Taking the match)
All right. Give me this. I need it for a moustache. Now close your eyes.
She runs out of the picture. Gillis has closed his eyes. THE CAMERA MOVES to his face.

GILLIS' VOICE

Something was the matter, all right. I was thinking about that girl of Artie's, that Miss Schaefer. She was so like all us writers when we first hit Hollywood -- itching with ambition, panting to get your names up there:
Screenplay by. Original Story by. Hmph! Audiences don't know somebody sits down and writes a picture. They think the actors make it up as they go along.

NORMA'S VOICE

Open your eyes.

Gillis opens his eyes.

Norma has equipped herself with a derby hat, a cane, and blacked in a small moustache. She goes into a little Chaplin routine. While she is doing it, the telephone rings. After a moment Max comes to the living room door.

MAX

Madame is wanted on the telephone.

NORMA

You know better than to interrupt me.

MAX

Paramount is calling.

NORMA

Who?

MAX

Paramount studios.

NORMA

(To Gillis)
Now, now do you believe me? I told you deMille would jump at it.

MAX

It is not Mr. deMille in person.
It is someone by the name or Gordon Cole. He says it's very important.
Certainly it's important. It's important enough for Mr. deMille to call me personally. The idea of having an assistant call me!

I myself was surprised at Mr. deMille's manners.

Say that I'm busy, and hang up.

Very good, Madam.

He bows and exits.

How do you like that? We've made twelve pictures together. His greatest successes.

Maybe deMille is shooting.

I know that trick! He wants to belittle me. He's trying to get my price down. I've waited twenty years for this call. Now Mr. deMille can wait till I'm good and ready.

She is in full makeup, with a veil, a daring hat, a suit so stunning only she would venture to wear it. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK. Beside her sits Gillis in the glen plaid suit. Max is driving.

About three days later she was good and ready. Incredible as it may seem, there had been some more of those calls from Paramount. So she put on about half a pound of makeup, fixed it up with a veil, and set forth to
Norma is examining her face in the mirror of her vanity. Max, while driving, sees her in the rear view mirror.

MAX
If you will pardon me, Madame. The shadow over the left eye is not quite balanced.

NORMA
Thank you, Max.

With a handkerchief, she corrects it.

D-9 MAIN GATE, EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIO

The car drives down Bronson and stops smack in front of the iron gate. A young policeman is talking to an extra; an old policeman sits reading a newspaper. Max sounds the horn impatiently.

YOUNG POLICEMAN
Hold that noise!

MAX
To see Mr. de Mille. Open the gate.

YOUNG POLICEMAN
Mr. deMille is shooting. You got an appointment?

MAX
No appointment is necessary. I am bringing Norma Desmond.

YOUNG POLICEMAN
Norma Who?

Norma has rolled down the window on her side. She calls to the old policeman.

NORMA
Jonesy! Come here, Jonesy!

OLD POLICEMAN
Yeah?
(He comes forward slowly)
Why, if it isn't Miss Desmond! How have you been, Miss Desmond?
NORMA
Fine, Jonesy. Now open that gate.

OLD POLICEMAN
Sure, Miss Desmond.
(To the young policeman)
Come on, Mac.

YOUNG POLICEMAN
They can't drive on the lot without a pass.

OLD POLICEMAN
Miss Desmond can. Come on.

They fling open the gate.

OLD POLICEMAN
(As the car drives through)
Stage eighteen, Miss Desmond.

NORMA
Thank you, Jonesy. And teach your friend some manners. Tell him without me he wouldn't have any job, because without me there wouldn't be any Paramount Studio.
(To Max)
Go on.

They drive through the gates. The old policeman goes to wall phone beside the gate, dials a number.

OLD POLICEMAN
(Into phone)
Norma Desmond coming in to see Mr. deMille.

D-10 STAGE 18

A scene from SAMPSON AND DELILAH is being rehearsed in the background. The usual turbulent activity surrounds it: extras, makeup men, grips, assistants, etc., etc. In the dim foreground a stage hand is answering a stand telephone. He puts down the phone and moves (CAMERA WITH HIM) to a second assistant.

STAGE HAND
Norma Desmond is coming to see Mr. deMille.
The second assistant walks (CAMERA WITH HIM) to the first assistant.

2nd ASSISTANT
Norma Desmond coming in to see Mr. deMille.

The first assistant (CAMERA WITH HIM) hurries to the set. Sitting with his back toward us is C.B. himself. He is rehearsing a scene with Hedy Lamarr.

1ST ASSISTANT
Norma Desmond is coming in to see you, Mr. deMille.

C. B. turns his head.

DEMILLE
Norma Desmond?

1st ASSISTANT
She must be a million years old.

DEMILLE
I hate to think where that puts me. I could be her father.

1ST ASSISTANT
I'm terribly sorry, Mr. de Mille.

By this time de Mille is on his feet.

DEMILLE
It must be about that appalling script of hers. What can I say to her? What can I say?

1ST ASSISTANT
I can tell her you're all tied up in the projection room. I can give her the brush ...

DEMILLE
Listen, thirty million fans have given her the brush. Isn't that enough?

1ST ASSISTANT
I didn't mean to --
Of course you didn't. You didn't know Norma Desmond as a plucky little girl of seventeen, with more courage and wit and heart than ever came together in one youngster.

1ST ASSISTANT
I hear she was a terror to work with.

DEMILLE
She got to be. A dozen press agents working overtime can do terrible things to the human spirit.
(to the set)
Hold everything.

He leaves, accompanied by his entourage.

EXT. STAGE 18
Norma's limousine drives up. Max dismounts and opens the door.

NORMA
(taking Gillis's hand)
Don't you want to come along, darling?

GILLIS
I don't think so. It's your script. It's your show. Good luck.

NORMA
Thank you, darling.

She presses his hand against her cheek, descends from the car and walks toward -

THE DOOR OF STAGE 18
The first assistant is holding it open. In the doorway stands Mr. deMille. Seeing Norma, he stretches out his arms.

DE MILLE
Hello, young fellow.
NORMA
Hello, Mr. deMille.

She has reached him. They embrace.

NORMA
Last time I saw you was someplace very gay. I remember waving to you. I was dancing on a table.

DE MILLE
Lots of people were. Lindbergh had just landed in Paris. Come on in.

He leads her into

D-13 STAGE 18

During the ensuing dialogue, Mr. deMille walks Norma towards the set.

DE MILLE
Norma, I want to apologize for not calling you.

NORMA
You'd better. I'm very angry.

DE MILLE
I'm pretty busy, as you can see...

NORMA
That's no excuse. You read the script, didn't you?

DE MILLE
Yes, I did.

NORMA
Then you could have picked up the phone yourself instead of leaving it to one of your assistants.

DE MILLE
What assistant?

NORMA
Don't play innocent. Somebody named Gordon Cole.

DE MILLE
Gordon Cole?

NORMA
And if you hadn't been pretty darned interested in that script, he wouldn't have tried to get me on the phone ten times.

DE MILLE
Gordon Cole... Look, Norma, I'm in the middle of a rehearsal. (Indicating his own chair) Make yourself comfortable.

He walks onto the set, accompanied by his assistants.

DE MILLE
(Sotto voce, to his first assistant) Get me Gordon Cole on the phone.

Meanwhile, Norma starts to sit, sees the name MISS LAMARR on the chair and with a look of distaste changes and sits on the one marked C.B. DE MILLE. From somewhere comes

A VOICE
Hey, Miss Desmond! Miss Desmond!

She looks around her.

VOICE
Up here!

Norma looks up at the scaffolding.

On the scaffold stands one of the electricians, next to his light.

ELECTRICIAN
It's met It's Hog-eyed

Norma waves at him.

NORMA
Hello.

Hog-eye points his light at her.

HOG-EYE
Let's get a look at you.
The beam of the lamp moves toward Norma. It hits her. She sits bathed in light. A couple of old costume extras recognize her.

**EXTRAS**
Say, it's Norma! Norma Desmond!

They rush over and start wringing her hand. Into the shot comes a middle-aged hairdresser.

**HAIRDRESSER**
Hello, Miss Desmond. It's Bessie.

Some elderly electricians and stagehands move in.

**D-14** **ANOTHER PART OF THE STAGE**

The first assistant brings the portable phone to deMille. DeMille lifts the receiver.

**DE MILLE**
Hello.

**D-15** **GORDON COLE'S OFFICE IN THE PROPERTY DEPARTMENT, GORDON COLE ON THE PHONE.**

**COLE**
Prop Department. Gordon Cole speaking.

**D-16** **DE MILLE ON THE PHONE**

**DE MILLE**
Cole, this is C. B. deMille. Have you been calling Norma Desmond?... What's it about?

**D-17** **GORDON COLE, ON THE PHONE**

**COLE**
It's that car of hers -- an old Isotta-Fraschini. Her chauffeur drove it on the lot the other day. It looks just right for the Crosby picture. We want to rent it for a couple of weeks.

**D-18** **DE MILLE ON THE PHONE**
DE MILLE
(Troubled)
Oh. Well, thank you.

He hangs up, walks back towards Norma. (CAMERA WITH HIM).

Norma stills sits in the shaft of light, surrounded by about a dozen people who have come up to pay court. DeMille gestures up to Hog-eye and the light shifts away. The people about Norma disperse slowly with various ad-libs.

DE MILLE
Well, Norma ...  
(He sits down next to her)
I got hold of Gordon Cole.

Norma hasn't heard a word.

NORMA
Did you see them? Did you see how they came?

DE MILLE
You know, crazy things happen in this business. I hope you haven't lost your sense of humor ...  

Suddenly he realizes that she is crying. She takes the handkerchief from his pocket and puts it over her eyes.

DE MILLE
What's the matter, Norma?

NORMA
Nothing. I just didn't realize what it would be like to come back to the old studio. I had no idea how I'd missed it.

DE MILLE
We've missed you too, dear.

NORMA
We'll be working again, won't we, Chief? We'll make our greatest picture.

DE MILLE
That's what I want to talk to you about.
NORMA
It's a good script, isn't it?

DEMILLE
It's got a lot of good things. Of course, it would be an expensive picture...

NORMA
I don't care about the money. I just want to work again. You don't know what it means to know that you want me.

DEMILLE
Nothing would thrill me more -- if it were possible.

NORMA
But remember, darling -- I don't work before ten in the morning, and never after 4:30 in the afternoon.

The first assistant comes up.

1ST ASSISTANT
We're ready with the shot, Mr. deMille.

DEMILLE
You'll pardon me, Norma? Why don't you just sit and watch? (He steps onto the set) O.K. Here we go.

1ST ASSISTANT
Roll 'em.

DEMILLE
Action!
The scene starts.

D-19 THE ISOTTA, PARKED OUTSIDE STAGE 18

Max stands talking to Gillis, who is seated in the car.

MAX
(Pointing to the row of offices in the building opposite)
You see those offices there, Mr. Gillis? They used to be her
dressing room, The whole row.

GILLIS
That didn't leave much for Wallace Reid.

MAX
He had a great big bungalow on wheels. I had the upstairs. See where it says 'Readers' Department'? I remember my walls were covered with black patent leather...

The words "Readers' Department" have registered on Gillis' mind. He gets out of the car.

GILLIS
I'll be with you in a minute.

He crosses the street towards the green staircase leading to the second floor.

Meanwhile, two prop men walking down the street come into the SHOT.

1ST PROP MAN
Hey, that's the comic car Cole was talking about!
(To Max)
Do you mind if we look inside?

MAX
Go away. Go away.

D-20  CUBICLE IN THE READERS' DEPARTMENT

Behind the desk sits Betty, typing the synopsis of a novel, a half-eaten apple marking her place. The door behind her opens and Gillis enters.

GILLIS
Just so you don't think I'm a complete swine -- if there's anything in Dark Windows you can use, take it. It's all yours.

BETTY
Well, for heaven's sake!

She moves the book and the apple aside and points at
the free space on the desk.

**BETTY**

Have a chair.

Gillis sits on the desk.

**GILLIS**

I mean it. It's no good to me anyway. Help yourself.

**BETTY**

Why should you do that?

**GILLIS**

If you get a hundred thousand for it, you buy me a box of chocolate creams. If you get an Oscar, I get the left foot.

**BETTY**

You know, I'd take you up on that in a minute. I'm just not good enough to do it all by myself.

**GILLIS**

What about all those ideas you had?

**BETTY**

See if they make sense. To begin with, I think you should throw out all that psychological stuff -- exploring a killer's sick mind.

**GILLIS**

Psychopaths sell like hotcakes.

**BETTY**

This story is about teachers -- their threadbare lives, their struggles. Here are people doing the most important job in the world, and they have to wring about getting enough money to re-sole their shoes. To me it can be as exciting as any chase, any gunplay.

**GILLIS**

Check.
Now I see her teaching day classes while he teaches night school. The first time they meet ...

From below comes the SOUND of the Isotta's horn.

GILLIS
Look, if you don't mind, I haven't got time to listen to the whole plot ...

BETTY
I'll make it short.

GILLIS
Sorry. It's your baby now.

BETTY
I'm not good enough to write it alone. We'll have to do it together.

GILLIS
I'm all tied up. I can't.

BETTY
Couldn't we work in the evenings? Six o'clock in the morning? This next month I'm completely at your disposal. Artie is out of town.

GILLIS
What has Artie to do with it.

BETTY
We're engaged.

GILLIS
Good for you. You've got yourself the best guy in town.

BETTY
I think so. They're on location in Arizona, shooting a Western. I'm free every evening, every weekend. If you want, we could work at your place.

GILLIS
It's just impossible.

BETTY
Nobody can be that busy.
There is another honk: from down below.

**GILLIS**
Look, Betty, It can't be done. It's out.

**BETTY**
You're tough, all right.

**GILLIS**
You're on your own. Stop being chicken-hearted and write that story.

**BETTY**
Honest to goodness, I hate you.

**GILLIS**
(Turning in the open door)
And don't make it too dreary. How about this for a situation: she teaches daytimes. He teaches at night. Right? They don't even know each other, but they share the same room. It's cheaper that way. As a matter of fact, they sleep in the same bed -- in shifts, of course.

**BETTY**
Are you kidding? Because I think it's good.

**GILLIS**
So do I.

**BETTY**
Come on back. Let me show you where it fits in.

She reaches in a drawer for her notes on Dark Windows.

**GILLIS**
(At the door)
So long.

Betty picks up the apple and is about to throw it after him.

**BETTY**
Oh, you --
GILLIS
And here's a title: AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER.
He ducks out quickly, slamming the door behind him. Betty looks after him, then angrily hurls the apple into the wastebasket.

D-21 STAIRCASE OUTSIDE READERS' DEPARTMENT
Max is rushing up the stairs toward the descending Gillis.

GILLIS
What's the matter, Max?

MAX
I just found out why all those telephone calls. It is not Miss Desmond they want. It is the car they want to rent.

GILLIS
What?

Max has seen something off.

MAX
Ssh...

With his head he indicates

D-22 ENTRANCE TO STAGE 18
The first assistant has opened the door. DeMille is showing Norma out.

DE MILLE
Goodbye, young fellow. We'll see what we can do.

NORMA
(embracing him)
I'm not worried. Everything will be fine. The old team together. Nothing can stop us.

She turns and walks out of the shot. De Mille stands for a second watching her, then turns to his assistant.
DE MILLE
Get Gordon Cole. Tell him to forget about her car. He can find another old car. I'll buy him five old cars, if necessary.

1ST ASSISTANT
Yes, Mr. De Mille.

They turn back into Stage 18.

D-23  THE ISOTTA

Gillis seated in the rear. Max is helping Norma in and putting the robe over her.

GILLIS
(Apprehensively)
How did it go?

NORMA
It couldn't have gone better.
It's practically set. Of course, he has to finish this picture first, but mine will be his next.

There is an exchange of looks between Max and Gillis.

GILLIS
He must be quite a guy.

NORMA
He'a a shrewd old fox. He can smell box office. Only I'm going to outfox him a little. This isn't going to be C. B. deMille's Salome. It's going to be Norma Desmond's Salome, a Norma Desmond Production, starring Norma Desmond...Home, Max.

MAX
Yes, Miss Desmond.

As he says the words, he and Gillis exchange a glance in the rear view mirror.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

END OF SEQUENCE "D"
SEQUENCE "E"

DISSOLVE IN ON:

E-1   CLOSEUP OF NORMA'S FACE

Absolutely no makeup. A hand with a strong small flashlight comes into the picture. The beam of the flashlight travels over the face, exploring it mercilessly. While the light is still on it, two pairs of creamed hands come into the shot and start to massage it.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-2   A SHORT MONTAGE of various beauty treatments applied to Norma.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-3   NORMA BEFORE THE MIRROR
      IN HER BEDROOM

It is nine o'clock in the evening. She is in night gown and negligee and has put triangular patches on the saddle of her nose and at the outer corner of each eye. She is rubbing lotion on her hands.

She gets up and crosses to the door of Gillis' room and opens it a crack.

NORMA
   Joe darling, are you there?

E-4   GILLIS' ROOM

It is dark except for a lamp over the chaise longue. Gillis lies on it, fully clothed, reading a book.

GILLIS
   Yes, Norma.

Through the slit in the door there is a suggestion of Norma.
NORMA
Don't turn around. Keep your
eyes on the book.

GILLIS
Yes, Norma.

Norma pushes the door open and comes in.

NORMA
I just came to say good night.
I don't want you to see me --
I'm not very attractive.

GILLIS
Good night.

NORMA
I've lost half a pound since
Tuesday.

GILLIS
Good.

NORMA
I was a little worried about the
line of my throat. This woman
has done wonders with it.

GILLIS
Good.

NORMA
You'd better get to bed yourself.

GILLIS
I think I'll read a little.

NORMA
You went out last night, didn't
you, Joe?

GILLIS
Why do you say that?

NORMA
I just happen to know it. I had
a nightmare and I screamed for
you. You weren't here. Where
were you?

GILLIS
I went for a walk.

NORMA
No you didn't. You took the car.

GILLIS
All right, I drove to the beach. Norma, you don't want me to feel I'm locked up in this house?

NORMA
Of course not, Joe. It's just that I don't want to be left alone. Not now, while I'm under this terrible strain. My nerves are being torn apart. All I ask is for you to be a little patient and a little kind.

GILLIS
I haven't done anything, Norma.

NORMA
Of course you haven't. I wouldn't let you.

She bends and kisses the top of his head.

NORMA
Good night, my darling.

She goes into her room, shutting the door behind her.

Gillis puts his book down and looks at her door.

E-5 THE DOOR TO NORMA'S ROOM

The light can be seen through the gouged-out keyhole. It goes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-6 UPPER LANDING STAIRWAY AND HALL BELOW (NIGHT) GILLIS' VOICE

Gillis, with his coat on by now, comes cautiously to the upper railing and looks down into the lighted hall below. Yes, I was playing hooky every evening along in there. It made me think I
Max is just extinguishing the lights. Max exits in, the direction of the living room.

After a moment Gillis starts silently down the stairs.

E-7 LIVING ROOM

(Lighted only by the last flicker of a fire on the hearth). Max is putting a fire screen in front of the fire. He hears some steps and the creak or the main door being opened. He looks out and sees

E-7a THE MAIN DOOR

Gillis, in the moonlit porch, is closing the main door behind him.

E-8 LIVING ROOM

Max looks after Gillis, his face enigmatic as ever.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-9 GARAGE AND DRIVEWAY
(MOONLIGHT)

Gillis comes into the shot, gets into the Isotta, drives it out or the garage and down the driveway to Sunset, as quietly as possible.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-10 READERS' OFFICE BUILDING
PARAMOUNT (NIGHT)

Start on a LONG SHOT. THE GILLIS' VOICE
BOOM MOVES FORWARD to the only two lights. They are the door and window of Betty Schaefer's cubicle. Betty sits at the desk, typing. Gillis, his coat off, his shirt-sleeves rolled up, j.s pacing the floor, discussing the construction of a sentence. The discussion at a stalemate, Betty suggests some coffee. Gillis agrees. From the electric plate on the shelf beside her, Betty takes a glass coffee machine. Gillis seats himself in her chair and starts typing.

Betty opens the door and comes out on the balcony to fill the coffee machine from the water cooler standing beside the door.

**BETTY**

I got the funniest letter from Artie. It's rained every day since they got to Arizona. They re-wrote the whole picture for rain and shot half of it. Now the sun is out. Nobody knows when they'll get back.

She moves back into the room.

**GILLIS**

Good.

**BETTY**

What's good about it? I miss him something fierce.

**GILLIS**

I mean this is good dialogue along in here. It'll play.

**BETTY**

It will?

**GILLIS**

Sure. Especially with lots of music underneath, drowning it out.

**BETTY**
Don't you sometimes hate yourself?

GILLIS
Constantly. No, in all seriousness, it's really good. It's fun writing again. I'm happy here, honest I am.

He resumes typing. Betty puts the water on. She picks up a pack of cigarettes on the desk, finds it's empty and throws it away, sees Gillis' open gold cigarette case and lighter on the table by the couch. Betty reaches for a cigarette. The inscription engraved inside the case catches her eye. It reads:

MAD ABOUT THE BOY --

Norma

BETTY
Who's Norma?

GILLIS
Who's who?

BETTY
I'm sorry. I don't usually read private cigarette cases.

GILLIS
Oh, that. It's from a friend of mine. A middle-aged lady, very foolish and very generous.

BETTY
I'll say. This is solid gold.

GILLIS
I gave her some advice on an idiotic script.

BETTY
It's that old familiar story, you help a timid little soul across a crowded street. She turns out to be a multimillionaire and leaves you all her money.

GILLIS
That's the trouble with you readers. You know all the plots.
Now suppose you proof-read page ten while the water boils.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-11  AN EMPTY STREET AT THE PARAMOUNT STUDIO (NIGHT)

GILLIS' VOICE

Sometimes when we got stuck we'd make a little tour of the drowsing lot, not talking much, just wandering down alleys between the sound stages, or through sound machine in the foreground, buying the sets they were getting ready for the next day's shooting. As a matter of fact, it was on one of those walks when she first told me about her nose ...

DISSOLVE TO:

E-12  PARAMOUNT'S NEW YORK STREET (NIGHT)

Betty and Gillis are walking down it, THE CAMERA AHEAD OF THEM.

BETTY

Look at this street. All cardboard, all hollow, all phoney. All done with mirrors. I like it better than any street in the world. Maybe because I used to play here when I was a kid.

GILLIS

What were you -- a child actress?

BETTY

I was born just two blocks from this studio. Right on Lemon Grove Avenue. Father was head electrician here till he died. Mother still works in Wardrobe.

GILLIS

Second generation, huh?

BETTY

Third. Grandma did stunt work for Pearl White. I come from a picture family. Naturally they took it for granted I was to become
a great star. So I had ten years of
dramatic lessons, diction, dancing.
Then the studio made a test. Well,
they didn't like my nose -- it slanted
this way a little. I went to a doctor
and had it fixed. They made more
tests, and they were crazy about my
nose -- only they didn't like my acting.

GILLIS
(Examining her nose
by the flame of his
lighter)
Nice job.

BETTY
Should be. It cost three hundred
dollars.

GILLIS
Saddest thing I ever heard.

BETTY
Not at all. It taught me a little
sense. I got me a job in the mail
room, worked up to the Stenographic.
Now I'm a reader...

GILLIS
Come clean, Betty. At night you
weep for those lost closeups, those
gala openings...

BETTY
Not once. What's wrong with being
on the other side of the cameras?
It's really more fun.

GILLIS
Three cheers for Betty Schaefer!
I will now kiss that nose of yours.

BETTY
If you please.

Gillis kisses her nose. As he stands there, his
face close to hers -

GILLIS
May I say you smell real special.

BETTY
It must be my new shampoo.

**GILLIS**

That's no shampoo. It's more like a pile of freshly laundered handkerchiefs, like a brand new automobile. How old are you anyway?

**BETTY**

Twenty-two.

**GILLIS**

That's it -- there's nothing like being twenty-two. Now may I suggest that if we're ever to finish this story you keep at least two feet away from me ... Now back to the typewriter.

They start walking in the direction of the office.

**D I S S O L V E  T O:**

**E-13   THE GARAGE**

Gillis gets out. From the seat next him he takes a batch of script, folds it and puts it in his pocket. He suddenly becomes aware that he is watched, turns. Max stands in the moonlight, evidently waiting for him.

**GILLIS**

What is it, Max? Want to wash the car, or are you doing a little spying in your off hours?

**MAX**

You must be very careful as you cross the patio. Madame may be watching.

**GILLIS**

How about my going up the kitchen stairs and undressing in the dark. Will that do it?

**MAX**

I'm not inquiring where Mr. Gillis goes every night...

**GILLIS**
Why don't you? I'm writing a script and I'm dying to finish it, no matter what.

MAX
It's just that I'm very worried about Madame.

GILLIS
Sure you are. And we're not helping her any, feeding her lies and more lies. Getting herself ready for a picture ... What happens when she finds out?

MAX
She never will. That is my job. It has been for a long time. You must understand I discovered her when she was eighteen. I made her a star. I cannot let her be destroyed.

GILLIS
You made her a star?

MAX
I directed all her early pictures. There were three young directors who showed promise in those days: D.W. Grirrith, C.B. deMille, and Max von Mayerling.

GILLIS
And she's turned you into a servant.

MAX
It was I who asked to come back, humiliating as it may seem. I could have gone on with my career, only I found everything unendurable after she divorced me. You see, I was her first husband.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-14 NORMA DESMOND'S BEDROOM

One lamp lit. Norma, in a white negligee, with the patches on her face, is pacing up and down -- a small, tormented, pitiable woman. Finally she opens
the door to:

E-15  GILLIS' ROOM (MOONLIGHT)

Gillis lies in bed asleep, Norma in the doorway.

NORMA
You're here, Joe ... When did you come home? Where were you? Is it a woman? I know it's a woman ... Who is she? Oh Joe, why can't I ask you? I must know, I must!

Her eyes fall on Gillis' coat, which hangs over a chair. In a pocket is part of the script. Norma takes it out, looks at it. She can't see it in the moonlight. She hurries with it into:

E-16  NORMA'S BEDROOM

Carrying the script Norma goes to the lamp and looks at it. On the first page she sees something which confirms all her suspicions. It reads:

UNTITLED LOVE STORY
by
Joseph C. Gilliss
and
Betty Schaefer

DISSOLVE:

E-17  BETTY'S CUBICLE (NIGHT)

Betty is typing. Gillis sits on the couch, proof-reading a scene. Betty stops typing and Gillis becomes aware of her eyes fixed on him.

GILLIS
Hey, what's the matter...
Betty, wake up!
(He whistles and catches her attention)
Why are you staring at me like that?

BETTY
Was I? I'm sorry.
GILLIS
What's wrong with you tonight?
What is it, Betty?

BETTY
Something came up. I don't want
to talk about it.

GILLIS
Why not?

BETTY
I just don't.

GILLIS
What is it you've heard. Come
on, let's have it.

Betty gets up.

GILLIS
Is it about me?

Betty doesn't answer, walks out on

E-18 THE BALCONY

She leans against a post, crying. Gillis comes out
after her.

GILLIS
Betty, there's no use running
out on it. Let's face it, what-
ever it is.

BETTY
It's nothing. I got a telegram
from Artie.

GILLIS
From Artie. What's wrong?

BETTY
He wants me to come on to Arizona.
He says it only oosts two dollars
to get married there. It would
kind of save us a honeymoon.

GILLIS
Why don't you? We can finish the
script by Thursday.
Betty stands crying silently.

**GILLIS**
Stop crying. You're getting married. That's what you've always wanted.

**BETTY**
I don't want it now.

**GILLIS**
Why not? Don't you love Artie?

**BETTY**
Of course I love him. I always will. I'm just not in love with him any more.

**GILLIS**
What happened?

**BETTY**
You did.

There is a moment's pause before he takes her in his arms. THE CAMERA MOVES AWAY.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**E-19**
**HALL AND STAIRCASE**
**DESMOND HOME- (NIGHT)**

Gillis enters, closes the door as quietly as he can, and goes up the stairs.

**E-20**
**GILLIS' ROOM**

He enters and turns on the light. He sinks down on the chaise longue, thinking. His eyes wander to the door of Norma's room. Through the gouged-out key-hole he sees the light.

**GILLIS' VOICE**
It wasn't until I got back to that peculiar prison of mine that I started facing the facts. There it was -- Betty Schaefer's future right in the palm of my hand. Betty Schaefer engaged to Artie Green, as nice a guy as ever lived. And she was in love with me. Me! She was a fool not to sense that there was something phony in my set-up. And I was a heel not to have told her. But you just can't say those things to somebody you're crazy about. Maybe I'd never
have to. Maybe I could get away with it, get away from Norma. Maybe I could wipe the whole nasty mess right out of my life...

From Norma's room comes the sound of a telephone being dialled. Gillis enters the shot and stands listening.

**NORMA'S VOICE**

Is this Gladstone 0858?

---

**E-21  NORMA'S BEDROOM**

Norma lies in bed, dialing a number. She has the beauty patches at the corners of her eyes and over her nose.

**NORMA**

Can I speak to Miss Betty Schaefer? She must be home by now.

---

**E-22  A BEDROOM IN BETTY'S FLAT**

Connie, a girl of Betty's age with whom she shares the flat, is on the phone. Betty, in a dressing-gown, comes from the bathroom, toothbrush in hand.

**CONNIE**

(Hand over mouthpiece)

Betty, here's that weird-sounding woman again.

**BETTY**

What is this anyway?

(Taking the phone)

This is Betty Schaefer.

---

**E-23  NORMA AT THE PHONE**

**NORMA**

Miss Schaefer, you must forgive me for calling you so late, but I really feel it's my duty. It's about Mr. Gillis. You do know Mr. Gillis? ...Exactly how much do you know about him? Do you know where he lives? Do you know how he lives? Do you know what he lives on?
E-24  BETTY AT THE PHONE

BETTY
Who are you? What do you want?
What business is it of yours anyway?

E-25  NORMA ON THE PHONE

NORMA
Miss Schaefer, I'm trying to do
you a favor. I'm trying to spare
you a great deal of misery. Of
course you may be too young to even
suspect there are men of his sort...

NORMA (Cont'd)
I don't know what he's told you, but
he does not live with relatives, nor
with friends, in the usual sense of
the word. Ask him ... Ask him again.

During the latter part of her call, the doors from
Gillis' room have been pushed open and Gillis has
walked towards her. Suddenly Norma senses his pre-
sence and turns around. The telephone freezes in her
hand. She tries to hang it up. Very calmly Gillis
takes the receiver from her hand.

GILLIS
(Into phone)
That's right, Betty, ask me again.
This is Joe.

E-26  BETTY ON THE PHONE

BETTY
Joe, where are you? What's this
all about?

E-27  GILLIS ON THE PHONE

Norma beside him.

GILLIS
Or maybe it would be a better
idea if you came over and saw it
for yourself. The address is 10086.

He hangs up. Norma looks up at him as he crosses to the other end of the room and stands staring at her. The silence becomes unbearable.

NORMA
Don't hate me, Joe. I did it because I need you. I need you as I never needed you. Look at me. Look at my hands, look at my face, look under my eyes. How can I go back to work if I'm wasting away under this torment? You don't know what I've been through these last weeks. I got myself a revolver. You don't believe me, but I did, I did! I stood in front of that mirror, only I couldn't make myself. It wouldn't be

NORMA (Cont'd)
fair to all those people who are waiting to see me back on the screen. I can't disappoint them. Only, if I'm to work, I need sleep, I need quiet, I need you! Don't just stand there hating me! Shout at me, strike me! But don't hate me, Joe. Don't you hear me, Joe?

GILLIS
Yes, I hear you. And I wish you'd keep still so I can hear the doorbell when she rings it.

E-28 BETTY AND CONNIE, DRIVING IN A SMALL COUPE DOWN (NIGHT)

E-29 INT. COUPE

Connie is looking at the house numbers.

CONNIE
Here's ten thousand seventy-nine, Betty. It must be over there.

Betty turns the car into the driveway of Norma's place, stops at the entrance steps. Betty gets out.
CONNIE
Betty, let me come along with you. Please.

BETTY
No, I'll be all right.

She shuts the door of the car and goes up the steps.

E-30 NORMA'S BEDROOM

Norma lies on the bed. Gillis sits in a far corner of the room, motionless.

NORMA
(In a whimpering monotone)
I love you, Joe. I love you, Joe.
I love you, Joe. I love you, Joe.

There is the sound of footsteps below and the ringing of a doorbell. Gillis rises.

NORMA
What are you going to do, Joe?

Without a word, he leaves the room. Norma raises herself on the bed, reaching for a black negligee lying at the foot of it. As she does so, she dislodges her pillow a little, revealing a revolver hidden beneath it.

E-31 DOWNSTAIRS HALL, THE DESMOND HOUSE (DARK)

Max crosses the hall, putting on his alpaca jacket. He turns on the lights. Outside stands Betty. From the staircase comes -

GILLIS' VOICE
It's all right, Max. I'll take it.

MAX
Yes, sir.

He stands back as Gillis opens the door.

GILLIS
Hello, Betty.

BETTY
(On the threshold)
I don't know why I'm so scared, Joe. Is it something awful?

GILLIS
Come on in, Betty,

Betty enters. As he leads her into the living room, Gillis puts his arm around her shoulders.

GILLIS
Ever been in one of these old Hollywood palazzos? That's from when they were making eighteen thousand a week, and no taxes. Careful of these tiles, they're slippery. Valentino used to dance here.

BETTY
This is where you live?

GILLIS
You bet.

BETTY
Whose house is it?

They have reached

E-32 THE LIVING ROOM

Gillis leads Betty in.

GILLIS
Hers.

BETTY
Whose?

GILLIS
Just look around. There's a lot of her spread about. If you don't remember the face, you must have heard the name of Norma Desmond.

BETTY
That was Norma Desmond on the phone?

GILLIS
Want something to drink? There's always champagne on ice, and plenty of caviar.
BETTY
Why did she call me?

GILLIS
Jealous. Ever see so much junk? She had the ceiling brought from Portugal. Look at this.

He pulls the rope, showing the projection screen under the picture.

GILLIS
Her own movie theatre.

BETTY
I didn't come here to see a house. What about Norma Desmond?

GILLIS
I'm trying to tell you. This is an enormous place. Eight master bedrooms. A sunken tub in every bathroom. There's a bowling alley in the cellar. It's lonely here, so she got herself a companion. A very simple set-up: An older woman who is well-to-do. A younger man who is not doing too well ... Can you figure it out yourself?

BETTY
No.

GILLIS
All right. I'll give you a few more clues.

BETTY
No, no! I haven't heard any of this. I never got those telephone calls. I've never been in this house ... Get your things together. Let's get out of here.

GILLIS
All my things? All the eighteen suits, all the custom-made shoes and the eighteen dozen shirts, and the cuff-links and the platinum key-chains, and the cigarette cases?
BETTY
Come on, Joe.

GILLIS
Come on where? Back to a one-room apartment that I can't pay for? Back to a story that may sell and very possibly will not?

BETTY
If you love me, Joe.

GILLIS
Look, sweetie -- be practical. I've got a good thing here. A long-term contract with no options. I like it that way. Maybe it's not very admirable. Well, you and Artie can be admirable.

BETTY
Joe, I can't look at you any more.

GILLIS
Nobody asked you to.

Betty turns from him, to hide the fact that she is crying.

GILLIS
All right, baby. This way out.

He leads her in the direction of the door.

E-33 UPPER LANDING, DESMOND HOUSE

Sitting crouched behind the balustrade is Norma, peering down into

E-34 THE LOWER HALL

Betty and Gillis have reached the entrance door. Gillis opens it.

GILLIS
Good luck to you, Betty. You can finish that story on the way to Arizona. When you and Artie get back, if the two of you ever feel like a swim, here's the pool ...
He switches on the light.

**E-35 THE PATIO**

The lights go on in the pool, which shines brilliantly in the dark garden.

**E-36 BETTY**

She doesn't even look. Her eyes filled with tears, she runs down the entrance porch toward her car.

**E-37 THE ENTRANCE HALL**

Gillis looks after her, closes the door. From the upper landing comes the sound of soft sobbing. He looks up.

**E-38 NORMA, ON THE UPPER LANDING**

Gillis ascends the stairs.

**NORMA**

Thank you, Joe -- thank you, Joe.

She tries to take his hand to kiss it as he passes. He doesn't stop. Norma catches his coat. Gillis moves right on into his room. Norma lies on the floor looking after him. She crawls toward a console, pulls herself up by it, starts towards Gillis' door, passes a mirror, realizes how she looks, moves back to the mirror and takes the patches off her face and does a hasty job of removing the cream with her handkerchief, readjusts her expression to a poor travesty of a smile and goes to the door of Gillis' room.

**NORMA**

May I come in? I've stopped crying. I'm all right again. Joe, tell me you're not cross -- tell me everything is just as it was, Joe.

She opens the door.

**E-39 GILLIS' ROOM**
In the foreground, open on the bed, is a half-packed suitcase, Gillis just putting some of his old shirts in. Norma stands staring, speechless, for a second. Gillis moves out of the shot towards the closets.

**NORMA**
What are you doing, Joe? What are you doing? You're not leaving me?

**GILLIS**
Yes, I am, Norma.

**NORMA**
No, you're not.
(Calling)
Max! Max!

**GILLIS**
Max is a good idea. He can help with my luggage.
(He gestures in the direction of the closet)
Thanks for letting me wear the handsome wardrobe. And thanks for the use of all the trinkets.

He takes the cigarette case and throws it on the chaise longue. Then he throws the lighter, the wrist watch, the platinum key-chain and the tie clip.

**GILLIS**
(Indicating the bureau)
The rest of the jewelry is in the top drawer.

**NORMA**
It's yours, Joe. I gave it to you.

**GILLIS**
And I'd take it in a second, Norma -- only it's a little too dressy for sitting behind the copy desk in Dayton, Ohio.

**NORMA**
These are nothing. You can have anything you want if you'll only stay. What is it you want -- money?
GILLIS
Norma, you'd be throwing it away.
I don't qualify for the job, not any more.

NORMA
You can't do this! Max! Max!
... I can't face life without you,
and I'm not afraid to die, you know.

GILLIS
That's between you and yourself,
Norma.

NORMA
You think I made that up about
the gun...

She rushes into her room. Gillis closes the suitcase
calmly, notices that he is still wearing some cuff-
links Norma gave him, takes them off.

Norma reappears in the door, carrying the revolver.

NORMA
See, you didn't believe me!..
Now I suppose you don't think I
have the courage!

GILLIS
Oh. sure -- if it would make a
good scene.

NORMA
You don't care. do you? But
hundreds of thousands of people
will care!

GILLIS
Wake up, Norma. You'd be killing
yourself to an empty house. The
audience left twenty years ago.
Now face it.

During the preceding. Max has entered. He stands
listening, paralyzed.

NORMA
That's a lie! They still want me!
GILLIS
No, they don't.

NORMA
What about the studio?
What about De Mille?

GILLIS
He was trying to spare your feelings.
The studio wanted to rent your car.

NORMA
Wanted what?

GILLIS
De Mille didn't have the heart
to tell you. None of us has had
the heart.

NORMA
That's a lie! They want me, they
want me! I get letters every day!

GILLIS
You tell her, Max. Come on, do
her that favor. Tell her there
isn't going to be any picture --
there aren't any fan letters,
except the ones you write yourself.

NORMA
That isn't true! Max?

MAX
Madame is the greatest star of
them all... I will take Mr.
Gillis' bags.

He leaves.

NORMA
You heard him. I'm a star!

GILLIS
Norma, grow up. You're a woman
of fifty. There's nothing tragic
about being fifty - not unless
you try to be twenty-five.

NORMA
I'm the greatest star of them
all.
GILLIS
Goodbye. Norma.

NORMA
No one leaves a star. That makes one a star.

Gillis picks up the typewriter and leaves.

NORMA
You're not leaving me!

E-40 STAIRCASE

Gillis descending with the typewriter.

NORMA'S VOICE
Joe! ...Joe!

There is the SOUND OF A SHOT. The glass of the front door is shattered. Gillis at the door opens it and walks out, without looking back.

Down the staircase rushes Norma, a disordered wild-ness in the way she moves.

NORMA
You're not leaving me!

She hurries after Gillis.

E-41 PATIO (NIGHT)

Dark except for lights from the house and the luminousness of the lit pool.

Gillis is crossing the patio towards the garage. He is carrying the typewriter. He doesn't accelerate his step, although he has heard the shot. Behind him Norma comes from the lighted house.

NORMA
You're not leaving me!

She shoots twice in rapid succession. Gillis drops the typewriter. The shots have swung him around. He is now facing Norma. She shoots him. This shot hits him in the belly. He doubles up, instinctively backs away from her, plummets into the lit pool.
Up the stone steps from the garage rushes Max. He sees the situation, hurries towards Norma, who stands exultant in the strange light from the pool.

**NORMA**
Stars are ageless, aren't they?

**Dissolve To:**

E-42 **The Patio**

Dawn is breaking. At the edge of the pool stand policemen, detectives and police photographers. Motorcycle policemen are holding off the mob which is trying to storm the house.

A lieutenant from the Homicide Bureau leaves the crowd around the pool and goes into

E-43 **The Lower Hall, Desmond House**

It is filled with a pandemonium of police officers, newspaper people, etc. who are kept from the upper floor by two policemen at the head of the stairs. The lieutenant from the Homicide Bureau goes through the crowd to the telephone at the foot of the stairs, picks up the phone and dials.

**Lieutenant**
Coroner's office? ... I want to speak to the Coroner ... Who's on this phone?

E-44 **The White Telephone in Norma's Bedroom**

Standing talking into it is Hedda Hopper.

**Miss Hopper**
I am! Now get off, this is more important ... Times City Desk? Hedda Hopper speaking. I'm talking from the bedroom of Norma Desmond. Don't bother with a rewrite man, take this direct. Ready? -- As day breaks over the murder house, Norma Desmond, famed star of yesteryear, is in a state of complete mental shock ...
THE CAMERA PANS TO ANOTHER PART OF THE BEDROOM, where Norma sits at a mirror, staring at herself blankly. Firing questions at her are the Captain of the Holmby Hills Division and the L.A. Homicide Squad. Max stands by faithfully.

**HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN**
You do not deny having killed this man, Miss Desmond?

**HEAD OF HOMICIDE**
Did you intend to kill him? Just answer me that.

**HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN**
Was it a sudden quarrel? Had there been any trouble between you before?

**HEAD OF HOMICIDE**
If it was a quarrel, how come you had the gun right there?

**HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN**
This guy -- where did you meet him for the first time? Where did he come from? Who is he?

**HEAD OF HOMICIDE**
Did he have a wife? Did he had a girl friend? Did you know them?

**HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN**
Had he been trying to blackmail you?

---

**E-45 PATIO - (DAWN) GILLIS' VOICE**

The body of Gillis being fished from the pool, put on a stretcher, covered with an army blanket. Then they got a couple of pruning hooks from the garden and fished me out ever so gently. Two men from the Coroner's office carry it towards the Coroner's hearse, CAMERA PANNING with them.

Well, this is where you came. Here's that pool again, the one I always wanted. They must have photographed me a hundred times. Then they got a couple of prun- ing hooks from the garden and fished me out ever so gently. Funny how gentle people get with you once you're dead. They beached me, like a harpooned baby whale, and started to check the damage, just for the record ... By this time the whole joint was jumping -- cops, reporters, neighbors, passersby -- as much hoopdedoo as we get in Los...
Angeles when they open a Super Market. Even the newsreel guys came roaring in. Here was an item everybody could have some fun with, the heartless so-and-so's. What would they do to her? Even if she got away with it in court—crime of passion—temporary insanity—those headlines would kill her: Forgotten Star a Slayer—Aging Actress—Yesterday's Glamour Queen...

E-46

NORMA'S BEDROOM

The interrogators are still firing questions at Norma who sits lifeless, staring at herself. Max watches.

HEAD OF HOMICIDE
Did the deceased ever threaten you? Were you in fear of bodily injury?

HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN
Did you hate him? Had you ever thought of doing something like this before?

HEAD OF HOMICIDE
Was theft involved? Did you catch him trying to steal something, or find he had stolen something?

A police lieutenant has entered, goes to the Head of Homicide.

LIEUTENANT
The newsreel guys have arrived with the cameras.

HEAD OF HOMICIDE
Tell them to go fly a kite. This is no time for cameras.

A word has pierced the mists that surround Norma.

NORMA
Cameras? ...What is it, Max?

MAX
The cameras have arrived, Madame.

NORMA
They have? Thank you, Max. Tell
Mr. DeMille I will be on the set at once.

Max flashes a look at the Head of Homicide.

HEAD OF HOMICIDE
What is this?

MAX
Please ...

HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN
(sotto voce, to Head of Homicide)
Well, it's one way to get her down stairs.

HEAD OF HOMICIDE
Okay. And let's have the car right outside.

7-1
NORMA
You will pardon me, gentlemen.
I have to get ready for my scene.

She takes a comb and runs it through her hair, then starts applying some wild makeup.

E-47 STAIRCASE AND LOWER HALL

Max makes his way down the stairs through the crowd of newsmen to the newsreel cameras, which are being set up in the hall below.

MAX
Is everything set up, gentlemen?
Are the lights ready?

From the stairway comes a murnur. They look up.

Norma has emerged from the bedroom and comes to the head of the stairs. There are golden spangles in her hair and in her hand she carries a golden scarf.

The police clear a path for her to descend. Press cameras flash at her every step.

Max stands at the cameras.

MAX
Is everything set up, gentlemen?

CAMERAMAN
The portable lights flare up and illuminate the staircase.

**MAX**
Are the lights ready?

**2ND CAMERA MAN**
All set.

**MAX**
Quiet, everybody! Lights! Are you ready, Norma?

**NORMA**
(From the top of the stairs)
What is the scene? Where am I?

**MAX**
This is the staircase of the palace.

**NORMA**
Oh, yes, yes. They're below, waiting for the Princess ... I'm ready.

**MAX**
All right.
(To cameramen)
Camera!
(To Norma)
Action!

Norma arranges the golden scarf about her and proudly starts to descend the staircase. The cameras grind. Everyone watches in awe.

GILLIS' VOICE
So they were grinding after all, those cameras. Life, which can be strangely merciful, had taken pity on Norma Desmond. The dream she had clung to so desperately had enfolded her...

At the foot of the stairs Norma stops, moved.

**NORMA**
I can't go on with the scene. I'm too happy. Do you mind, Mr. DeMille, if I say a few words?
Thank you. I just want to tell you how happy I am to be back in the studio making a picture again. You don't know how much I've missed all of you. And I promise you I'll never desert you again, because after "Salome" we'll make another picture, and another and another. You see, this is my life. It always will be. There's nothing else - just us and the cameras and those wonderful people out there in the dark... All right, Mr. DeMille, I'm ready for my closeup.

FADE OUT.

THE END