

And most important, the basic content of the film is anti-appeasement, anti-fascist.

Yet, in spite of the foregoing, this reviewer must confess to a degree of impatience with *Hostages*. Not with the film proper, but with its genre. We are simply oppressed by the limitations of *melodrama* itself. Melodrama, at best, is a contrived thing. It has its own logic and its own life, but hardly ever does it encompass the fuller, infinitely more complicated life of the world outside of it, even though there is a correspondence between the two. Perhaps we sound carping. *Hostages* is good stuff.

Nevertheless we know that the underground movement lends itself to art forms other than melodrama. This reviewer thirsts for a sample in films.

★

WHEN a movie like Warner Brothers' *Thank Your Lucky Stars* finds it necessary to call on some five authors to get it off the cutting-room floor, that's warning enough. Obviously no one scribe was willing to assume sole responsibility for the results. We didn't have enough patience to sit this one out. There were two or three laughs, but do you call that percentage?

We would like to think that Warners deliberately made the film as a horrible example to its escapist critics of how bad the company could be if it tried. As if Warners were saying, "there but for the grace of God goes Warner Brothers." Or is that too complicated?

Mind you, we are not saying that Warners hasn't earned the right to unbend now and then, but there are ways of doing it other than presenting Bette Davis in a dubious ditty to the effect that the war has copped off desirable bedfellows and second best must serve. Or a thoroughly revolting "Harlem" opus, "Ice-cold Kate," that manages in a mercifully brief span to sound the complete chauvinist gamut.

★

TO JUDGE by the tangled throngs at the box-office of Radio City Music Hall, this department is not going to get within screening distance of *Lassie Come Home*, for a long time to come. (Film is based on the late Eric Knight's animal story, directed by Fred M. Wilcox for MGM.) Let's therefore fall back on *Variety Mag.*, dependable as always: "LASSIE NO DOG AT \$110,000, BIG!"

DANIEL PRENTISS.

Obsolete Love

FOR years Frederick Lonsdale, the English playwright, has been making hay with the peccadillos of the leisure class of his country. The result of his labors has been a series of plays which the critics of

the twenties and thirties affectionately regarded as comedies of manners. Mr. Lonsdale even achieved a slight reputation as a social historian and critic. But if his latest play—*Another Love Story*—or any of his other plays—makes any useful commentary, then so do the Bobbsey Twins.

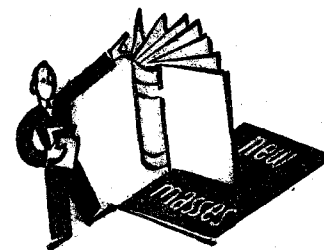
The critics regarded his newest opus as an unfortunate accident, an inferior article not up to the usual Lonsdale standard. But I agree with Burton Rascoe (who threshed about with joy over the play) on one point at least—that *Another Love Story* is like every other Lonsdale play. *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney* may be less dull, or the *Highroad* may have greater purpose, but that is where the distinctions end. The truth is, the playwright loves the snob characters of the Algie, Bertie, Reggie and Willie type, and his attitude, dramatically, is always uniform. *Aren't We All*, the first play of his that I knew anything about, was produced in New York some twenty years ago. If you will take the trouble to read it, you will discover, except for superficial differences in plot, that its characters and their utterances are almost interchangeable with those of *Another Love Story*—as are the author's underlying ideas. Love is divine, sex is delightful, all men are polygamous, and no women are ever virtuous; whoever says differently is a prig, and Mr. Lonsdale has a binful of trite generalizations to prove it.

His characters, of course, invariably belong to the idle rich. The only member of any given cast who has visible means of support, is the butler. He is tolerated because (aside from his usefulness) he is usually a philosophical fellow who shares his master's well-bred contempt for the strange animals of the lower brackets. Once in a while, the son of a farmer (agriculture is so much more genteel than trade or industry) breaks into the charmed circle, as does the chief lover of *Another Love Story*, but once he exhibits the proper scorn for an honest day's work he is accepted with open arms.

The fact that Mr. Lonsdale's particular kind of leisure class such as the play is based upon went out with the war, seems to deter the author not at all. But the dated quality of the play is even more obvious than that. Twice the ancient leer about bedrooms and etchings is tossed out as an example of prime humor. That, I believe, ought to give you an idea of what went on all evening.

It is really a pity that a fine cast headed by Roland Young, Margaret Lindsay (first time on the stage) and Arthur Margetson were wasted on such seedy stuff. For all their professional astuteness, they were completely lost in a production that can only be described as completely out of this world.

JOSEPH FOSTER.



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