

VANITY FAIR'S PRIZE MOVIE SCENARIO

Winner of the Thousand-Dollar Reward for the Worst Short Film Story

BY ALEISTER CROWLEY

IT is time to take the public into our confidence. From what wonder-working, from what throbbing convolutions of what palpitating gray matter came those filmy, shimmering reels that thrill us so? At enormous expense we have prevailed upon those household-word-named impressionists—or shall we say impressionists?—Mr. Griffith, Mr. Sennett and Mr. Ince—to allow us to publish the first draft of their forthcoming hyperpyrexia, with their matchless scenario and sketches and explanatory notes.

THE PEARL GIRL

Or, *The Whale, the Siren and the Shoestring.*
Scenario (probably) by Roy McCardell.

REEL I:—The home of *Senor Mañana*, the Silver King of Mexico, his daughter, *Peseta*, a willowy brunette with saucer-like eyes. (*Peseta Mañana*—Miss Mary Pickford.) (NOTE: *Miss Pickford is a blonde. We will have to overcome this difficulty somehow.*) Their wealth, elegance, and noble, patriarchal manners. Arrival of *Diego*, the pearl-fisher, with the only pearl in the world the size of an emu's egg. Sale of the pearl to the *Senor*. The pearl taken to *Tiffany's* to be set in a necklace. *Peseta* is observed at the necklace counter by a *Sinister Stranger*. (NOTE: *Arnold Daly might play this part very well.*) *Peseta* comes of age. Magnificent tango party, at which she wears the pearl. Entry of *Sinister Stranger*, who demands an interview with the *Wicked Baron*—we mean the *Silver King*, or *Senor Mañana*.



PESETA MANANA

(NOTE BY PRODUCER: During all these scenes, past, present and future, whether on the burning sands of Coney Island or the frozen steppes of the Bronx, people should constantly snatch up telephones and talk into them excitedly, without waiting to get any particular number. It all helps. Silhouettes of mysterious people may also pass behind a window. They have nothing to do with the story, but they excite curiosity and are soon forgotten in the general turmoil.)



THE SINISTER STRANGER

Registering pearlmania on the occasion of his first sight of the gem. Good facial work, this. He is not wearing a pagoda, but a fashionable movie cloak. The more capoea, the more sinister.

had started life on a shoestring. *Mañana*, in despair, and realizing that he can never live down the dishonest episode of the transfer, pulls the shoestring from his pocket and strangles himself with it. The *Sinister Stranger* snatches up *Peseta* and bolts, but they stumble over the hacienda and fall from the patio into the *caramba*, which is full of water. *Peseta* (pearl and all) is swallowed by a whale. (*The Whale*—Tom Wise or Miss Marie Dressler.)

REEL II: *Limousine Lollipop*, an exquisite blonde, is fishing on the Yukon. Her mother has banished her from their Tenth Avenue mansion to the frozen Alaskan wilds, as she is getting much too fond of the Great White Way, and thinks it wise to let daughter cool off a bit. Besides, *Mamma* has a little affair of her own, and *Limousine* is in the way. By and by, after an encounter with a polar bear, she meets a lovely *Esquimau*. They chat. The *Esquimau* embraces *Limousine*. She kills the *Esquimau* for trying to flirt with her, and then suddenly she feels a pull on her line. It slackens, but there is still something there. She reels it in. She has false-hooked the whale by the pearl necklace which his throat was too small to swallow. (See any *Natural History*.) The great pearl is hers! She plots to return to Broadway with her prize. But it is spring; the ice is breaking up; she finds herself adrift upon the trackless ocean!

The spring advances rapidly. *Limousine's* iceberg drifts ever in a southerly direction, melting as it goes. At last it is only just large enough to support her. Still it grows smaller! What can she do? Standing on one toe she pirouettes on the ever dissolving ice cake. An inspiration! She produces a play she has written and reads it aloud. Like magic the ice cake expands. The play is a frost! Suddenly a liner appears. No; it is a British man-of-



LIMOUSINE FISHING ON THE YUKON

It is midwinter; but the midnight sun is visible; for it is tea-time. *Limousine* bitterly regrets the gay life of Broadway. The jagged things are *Mount Irenecastle*, *Mount Georgeoban*, and *Mount P.P.A.* *Limousine*, it will be noticed, has been banished by her *mamma* to Alaska in her summer frock and her high-heeled bottines.

war. Gracious heavens! and *Limousine's* sole literary solace in these trying months has been a copy of "The Fatherland"! *Limousine* is taken to London as an exceedingly suspicious character, and enters the Tower of London by the gloomy portals of the Traitor's Gate!

REEL III: *Limousine* is to be shot in the Tower as a spy. But, as the command "Fire!" is given, a *Zeppelin* drops a bomb of high explosive, which deflects the bullets. She herself is blown gently into the river, where she is rescued by a waiting U-boat, which has popped up to see the result of the *Zeppelin* raid.



SENIOR MANANA STRANGLING HIMSELF

No, he is not smoking a cigar: that is his tongue. Note how the muscles on his arm stand out because of the efforts he is expending to make a good job of it.

It will doubtless have occurred to everyone that so far we have had no motor-cars; and a film without a motor-car is like "Macbeth" without the Thane of Cawdor. So we will have the submarine pursued by the whole British army—in twelve-cylinder automobiles. *Limousine*, however, escapes on the submarine. (This is rather a bore to have her arrested a second time. We must thrash out something new. Perhaps after lunch!) On arrival at New York *Limousine* is met at the docks by . . .

Now we switch right back to the *Mañana* family. It's irritating of course, but all the movie concerns are doing it. *Peseta*, inconsolable at the loss of her father and her pearl, though glad that she has escaped the *Whale*—which she did in the usual manner by diving down his throat (large enough for her, if not for the pearl) and boring her way out with a hatpin—finds herself upon a desert island. Now, do you remember the play which *Limousine* produced on the ice cake? You don't. All right, let's have a switchback then, showing the play. Now you remember, don't you? Good. There isn't any reason why you should recall the incident, but that switchback will add a few feet to the film. Penniless and starving, *Peseta* decides to become a newspaper reporter on the "Coral Evening Headache."



LOVE IN THE ARCTIC
Rear view of the rude and flirtatious Esquimau embracing the fair Limousine

She gets a position as Society Editor and is rapidly promoted, after various adventures (which I shall leave to my subordinates to work out). She is finally transferred to *Vanity Fair* in New York and is made *Lingerie Editor*. In this capacity she goes down to the docks and—

Recognizes in *Limousine Lollipop* the *Sinister Stranger* who has thus disguised himself in order to win back the pearl and the girl. They embrace, of course! (*Darkness.*)

"Pass out on this side, please, and let those take their seats who have not seen the film."