

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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***To Catch a Thief* (1955)**

Alfred Hitchcock

Contents (Overview-Synopsis-Characters-Character Analysis-Themes-Scenes)

OVERVIEW

Director Sir Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) is a household name and perhaps the best-known British filmmaker. With over 50 films to his credit, Hitchcock helped to shape the modern understanding of the thriller genre. His best-known films include *The Birds*, *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, and *Dial M for Murder*, all of which have earned accolades, including preservation by the US Film Registry. In 1960, Hitchcock was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of Fame with two stars for his work in both film and television. He was also the first recipient of the BAFTA Academy Fellowship Award.

Film Based on a 1952 novel of the same name by David Dodge, *To Catch a Thief* began production in 1954. Filmed mostly in Paramount Studios in Hollywood, *To Catch a Thief* includes several on-location scenes at resorts along the Mediterranean coast including Nice, Cannes, and Saint-Jeannet. Shot in widescreen VistaVision, this film was a change for the director, and it shows in how he uses wide shots. The film went on to win an Academy Award for Best Cinematography, alongside another half-dozen nominations. *To Catch a Thief* remains popular among viewers, while some critics hold it in a lesser regard. At the time of writing, it has a 92% approval rating on the film review aggregation site Rotten Tomatoes.

Background *To Catch a Thief* remains one of the few Hitchcock titles retained by Paramount, the others being sold to Hitchcock in the early 1960s and currently distributed by Universal. With a budget of \$2.5 million and a box office return of \$8.75 million, this film classifies as a smash hit. Despite economic success, critics' reviews were mixed. One popular review has this to say: "It may occasionally be guilty of coasting on pure charm, but *To Catch a Thief* has it in spades -- as well as a pair of perfectly matched stars in Cary Grant and Grace Kelly." While contemporary viewers thought the film lacked suspense, many modern viewers enjoy the pacing and the twist ending.

CINEMATIC NARRATION

To Catch a Thief is an excellent example of a Hitchcock thriller. It follows a man through a breakneck adventure to prove his innocence against the odds, featuring a cold-hearted blonde who eventually warms up to the man on the run. These and other similarities to Hitchcock's previous thrillers earn it a place among the greatest films of all time as judged by the American Film Institute. Robert Burks won an Academy Award for his outstanding cinematography, an artistic touch that stands the test of time. Utilizing many montages and artistic representations of the cat burglar keeps the real thief's identity hidden until the film's end without red herrings or other plot devices.

SYNOPSIS

Former cat burglar and French Resistance member John Robie is the first to be blamed when a new spate of robberies crops up [can a 'spate crop up'? Sorry, just trying to smooth it all out] on the French Riviera. After evading the police, Robie finds his way to a restaurant owned by a former colleague, Monsieur Bertani, who gives him information about some possible allies who could help Robie clear his name. Danielle Foussard, the daughter of a former resistance ally and criminal comrade, gives him a ride by boat to a nearby beach club where he disembarks. The former burglar finds a steadfast ally in

insurance agent H. H. Hughson. Hughson gives Robie a list of valuable jewels currently in the possession of rich women vacationing in France.

Using the list, John Robie decides to ingratiate himself with Jessie Stevens, a rich widow with a large collection of poorly protected jewelry personally insured by Hughson. Robie poses as a rich man from Oregon to get closer to Jessie. Jessie's daughter, Frances, begins falling for him. She also grows suspicious: Robie doesn't act like an American tourist. Eventually, she figures out his true identity, but Robie won't admit he used to be the infamous "Cat." They spend a romantic night together, but Frances' feelings shift the next morning when her mother's jewels go missing.

Robie escapes by the rooftop just as the police arrive, committed to finding the true thief and clearing his name not just legally, but in Frances' eyes. After being attacked while staking out a villa where a rich woman on the list is staying, Foussard, Danielle's father, is killed and proclaimed the thief by police. Robie refuses to believe this, as Foussard has a wooden leg, making him unable to silently clamber along the Rivera's rooftops. With this evidence, he approaches the Stevens with a plan.

Robie escorts Jessie and Frances to an opulent costume ball dressed as a masked moor. Jessie complains of chest pains and asks him to retrieve her "heart pills." The masked moor returns with the pills several minutes later and dances with Frances long into the night. They are the last two to leave the dance floor, the rest of the guests having retired long before. Upon entering their room in the villa, the moor removes the mask, revealing that Hughson has taken Robie's place.

On the villa rooftop, Robie watches, almost giving up when he sees the police below begin to head home. Then he sees another figure slowly creep across the rooftop. It's Danielle Foussard, framing Robie for her burglaries by using his method. The police spot Robie first, threatening to shoot him if he doesn't come down. But after a short struggle, he reveals that Danielle is on the rooftop with him. She slips and falls, clinging to a gutter. Robie catches her just before she falls, but only pulls her up after she loudly admits her part in the crime spree.

CHARACTERS

John Robie ("The Cat") – Robie is a former circus acrobat turned cat burglar, French Resistance fighter

Frances Stevens – Daughter of an American socialite, Frances begins falling for Robie

Jessie Stevens – Frances' mother

H. H. Hughson – An insurance agent trying to catch the jewel thief

Monsieur Bertani – The owner of a local restaurant and Robie's old partner-in-crime

Danielle Foussard – The daughter of one of Robie's war comrades

Foussard – Danielle's father and Robie's old comrade

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

John Robie

Robie fought in the French Resistance during World War II after he and his cellmates escaped from prison during a bombardment. Tried and convicted as the notorious burglar "The Cat," Robie has never been able to escape the ghost of his past. In trying to prove his innocence, he falls in love with Frances.

Unimaginative This trait may seem contradictory given Robie's creative scheme to prove his innocence, but that comes from desperation more than a character trait. Robie's unimaginative nature shows most specifically in his interactions with Frances. Quite simply, he completely underestimates her. He doesn't imagine that an heiress such as Frances could have complicated thoughts or a desire to live a life of crime. This leads to a surprise when she calls him by his real name on their picnic date. Not only has she figured out who he really is, but she's incredibly close to guessing what he's doing at the villas of the rich throughout the Riviera: He's not casing them for his own burglaries, but the likelihood that the person mimicking his style will strike and he can discover who it is. Robie's lack of imagination shows in

Foussard's murder attempt as well. Despite a warning and a potential police backup, Robie is caught entirely off guard when Foussard and the other man attack and nearly kill him because he didn't change his behavior.

Determined Much like other similar Hitchcock protagonists, Robie's determination is ever-present. He knows the only way to clear his name is to catch the real thief. He begins his quest by returning to his old haunt, Monsieur Bertani's restaurant. Here, Bertani does little to help him, but this doesn't dissuade Robie from looking into the thefts. His determination shows in the flower market when he manages to convince Hughson to help him while being chased by the police. Even Danielle's outburst at the funeral doesn't dissuade him. He's willing to give up all his old friends and contacts if it means clearing his name.

Observant Robie is very observant. He can often be seen looking and watching throughout the film, finding traces even the police forensic teams may have missed with a simple look. It's his method of burglary someone is copying. Robie also knows just how close he can cut it, often escaping from the police by a hair's breadth. Robie's observant traits show in his attempts to appear normal and unassuming. In some cases, he can disappear without a trace, often losing the police just by acting calmly in a crowd, such as his first escape by bus. He also notices when someone has gone through his belongings after his trip to the beach with Frances, something many people would have missed.

Frances Stevens

Frances is a young socialite from America. Her mother struck it rich when oil was discovered on land her father owned. Seeking romance and adventure, she becomes entangled in Robie's attempt to find justice.

Adventurous Frances revels in a good adventure. We can see this early on as she seems to latch onto Robie, knowing that he's lying about who he is. She seems almost delighted when she realizes that the police are following him. Her driving skill allows her not only to escape the police following them but scare Robie half to death as she attempts maneuvers that would make some professional drivers sick with fright. Her desire to live adventurously continues throughout the film, culminating in a final chase back up the cliffside to Robie's villa. There, Frances admits her desire to move in with him and live in France.

Observant Frances is even more observant than Robie. She begins displaying this trait even before we learn her name: She's on the beach and watches Robie swim ashore when Danielle drops him off by boat. Attentive viewers can even see her in the middle of several shots during this sequence. When Robie reappears several days later as "Mr. Burns," she quickly begins putting things together. Not only does Robie not act like a tourist, he barely acts like an American, never bringing up current events and being far too confident to move around Nice on his own for a man who supposedly speaks no French. While these observations alarm Robie at first, he slowly comes to rely on Frances for her observational skills.

Planner Frances comes up with a stellar plan towards the film's end, but she also shows this skill fairly early on. Knowing that Robie isn't who he says he is, she tries to seduce him in an attempt to get him to 'spill the beans' about his real identity which she assumes—correctly—is John Robie, The Cat. It would make sense, given that her mother has a large and valuable collection of diamond jewelry. She plans to get Robie alone for the picnic, spying on his activities around the villa before escaping the police for a little privacy. Her plan works, but not as completely as she would hope because Robie refuses to admit who he is. After nearly being murdered at the Silva's villa, Robie approaches Frances for help getting into the costume ball. She hatches a brilliant scheme that, with the help of her mother and Hughson, allows Robie to climb to the roof unobserved and catch the real thief after the party.

H. H. Hughson

Hughson is an insurance agent from London. He comes to the South of France to personally see to the safety of several notable pieces insured by his company after the rash of thefts in the area. Working with Robie, he hopes to retrieve and return the stolen jewels to their rightful owners.

Unconventional Hughson is willing to go to great lengths to ensure the return of his client's jewels. He is already in the South of France personally investigating the jewels in the hope of finding them instead of paying out the large sums they've been insured for. Moving from dedicated to unconventional, Hughson decides to give a list of valuable jewels to a known burglar in the hope that he can catch the thief. Hughson continues his unconventional approach when he disagrees with Commissar Lepic's decision to close the case after Foussard's death. He dons Robie's costume at the annual gala and pretends to be him long into the night, nearly dancing himself into exhaustion to act as cover for Robie's investigation. This unconventional gamble pays off, as Robie discovers the true thief and returns the jewels.

THEMES

Investigation Investigation is a key theme of *To Catch a Thief*. While Robie knows that someone is imitating his style of burglary, he doesn't know who it could be. He can narrow it down to someone working for Bertani, as the men working for the restaurateur were his comrades during the war and knew him best. Despite this, we don't learn the real thief's identity until the very end of the film. With the help of Hughson and Frances, Robie is able to put together clues of where the thief will strike next, often assessing the scenes for ease of entry and possible escape routes. The police fail to help Robie, almost comically committed to closing the case rather than truly solving it. Because of this, our intrepid investigators can easily trick the police at many junctures. The policemen are more interested in headlines than actual investigations.

Crime/Justice These themes drive the main plot, as Robie seeks his freedom from false accusations. Indeed, he was once an infamous burglar: He doesn't dispute this. However, the French legal system allows for his past crimes to count as proof of continued criminality and for hearsay by police to rapidly close cases. In a personal quest for justice, Robie must do the police's job for them to find justice. At multiple points in the story, Robie faces the injustice of other people's perception of him. Despite not having stolen anything during his entire parole, people always assume he's an unrepentant criminal who hasn't reformed. Because of this, he is often blamed for the crimes of others, even by those who seek to support him. Only by eventually catching the real thief does he find relief from his criminal past and finally get the police off his back.

Adventure There's a good bit of adventure had by the characters in *To Catch a Thief*. Foreshadowing Cary Grant's final film with Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*, multiple close calls, car chases, and escapes from aircraft are to be had as Robie seeks personal justice. Frances enjoys the adventure Robie brings into her life, forcing her way into his investigation in the hopes of seeing a real live burglar in action. She never really gets to see Robie working, but Robie has to trespass and commit other shady actions both to track the real thief and avoid the police. While a small theme, it is important to help with the plot's pacing.

Love Love becomes a potent theme late in the film. While Frances begins falling for Robie quickly, it's obvious that he doesn't return her feelings at first. His obsession with clearing his name takes precedence over everything else, and he eventually tells her to 'get lost.' It's at this moment that Frances reveals her love for Robie which has been slowly growing since they first met. Robie is hesitant to admit that he's falling for Frances as well, but by the film's end, it's clear that their admiration is mutual. The only thing that gives Robie pause is having to welcome Jessie into his home as his mother-in-law, a bit of comedy to end the film.

Disloyalty This is another theme that becomes clear only at the film's end. After Danielle is unmasked as the copycat burglar, she tells all. In return to being pulled to the relative safety of the villa rooftop, she tells the police that not only has she been committing all the robberies but also that Monsieur Bertani was the one who masterminded the scheme along with his former criminal employees. This represents a massive betrayal for Robie, who believed that they hated him all of this time. In reality, they sought to blame their crime spree on him because of his reputation. They claim to want to kill him for these robberies, but in reality, they want to kill him only when he gets too close to figuring out that Danielle has been imitating his method of burglary. This disloyalty by his former comrades makes Robie's story surprisingly tragic.

Appearance vs. Reality Perception plays a large role in *To Catch a Thief*. Because of his past infamy, Robie is singled out as the probable suspect when someone begins stealing rich women's jewelry along the French Riviera. The reality is that Robie has been living a peaceful life growing grapes and making wine. He no longer has an interest in cat burglary. Because of his past success as a thief, he has to fight against the perception of his continued criminality. Even those who come to trust him think he's only a step away from 'relapsing' into his diamond 'addiction.' In reality, Bertani and his crew are using Robie's fame and technique to frame him, covering their illicit activities throughout the South of France. Only by physically catching the real thief can Robie clear his name.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How does the theme of appearance and reality play into the plot of *To Catch a Thief*?

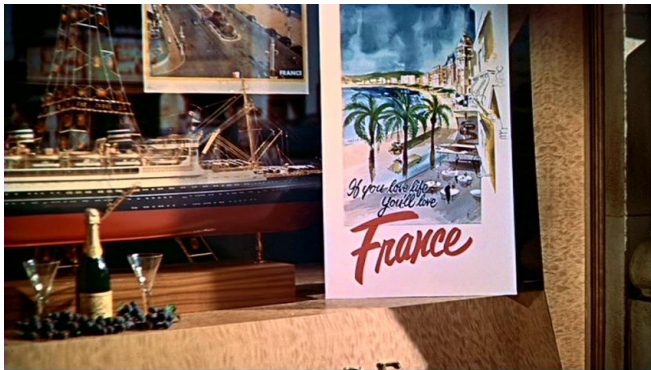
How many Hitchcock plot devices can you list in this film?

In your opinion, is this film strengthened or weakened by its comic elements?

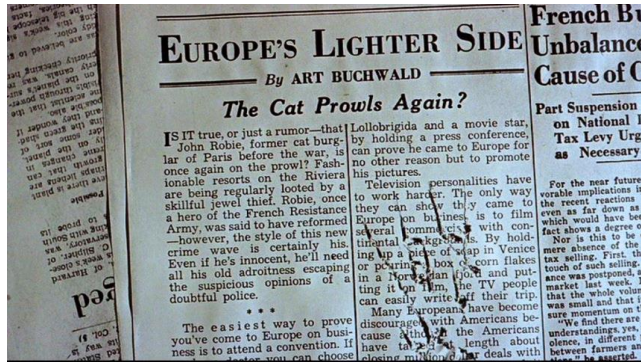
Loyalty and disloyalty play large roles in *To Catch a Thief*. In what way do these elements mirror the internal conflicts of the French Resistance during WWII?

SCENES

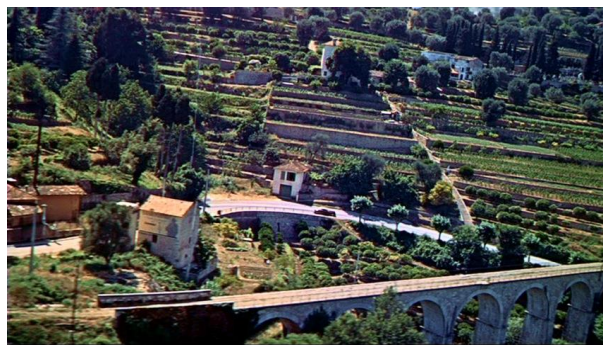
Robberies- The opening credits roll over the backdrop of a travel agency somewhere in America. After the text disappears, the camera zooms in on an ad with the words, "If you love life, you'll love France." A scream interrupts the jaunty music with a hard cut to a woman panicking in a hotel room. "My jewels! My Jewels!" she screams, looking down at an empty jewelry case. The scene fades out for a moment before the camera finds a black cat creeping along a rooftop. Inside a room, black-gloved hands scoop up pearls and gold necklaces before the cat on the roof creeps back the way it came. The next morning, another woman screams: "My diamonds! My diamonds! They're gone!" The cat appears on a different roof, and the pattern commences anew. A room full of police officers fades out to show several piling into an unmarked car and driving away. The car travels swiftly down the winding hillside roads towards a villa overlooking the bay.



“The Cat Prowls Again”- A maid works around the villa, dusting and tidying. She looks at a black cat who looks up at her. The feline rests on a newspaper that reads, “The Cat Prowls Again? Is it true, or just a rumor—That John Robie, former cat burglar of Paris before the war, is once again on the prowl?” The camera pulls back and spies John Robie through a window. He overhears the police car speeding up the road, its tires squealing around the tight turns. Without a moment’s hesitation, Robie enters his home, climbs the stairs, and walks into his bedroom. Pressing himself against the wall to reduce the chances of being spotted, he watches the police pile out of their car and enter the villa. He prepares a shotgun, loading shells into both barrels before lying it gently across the arms of a chair. His maid calls for him, saying the police wish for him to come down to the station in Nice. Robie asks the policemen if he could change into something formal before returning to his bedroom and locking the door. The policemen panic when they hear the shotgun go off, assuming that Robie has committed suicide.



Chase- The officers inside the villa rush up the stairs and try to break down the door. The other policemen, who had surrounded the villa, come running inside to help. Robie watches from the rooftop, shaking his head. The police finally break into Robie’s room, but they find only the gun. Outside, a maroon car peels out of the driveway and races onto the road. The police follow after piling into the same car. Mounted on a helicopter, the camera follows the chase through several little towns that cling to the sides of cliffs until the maroon car seems to disappear among the compact houses. The police scratch their heads, looking around when the maroon car reappears, zipping past them at high speeds. Both cars screech to a halt as a shepherd guides his flock across the street. The police pile out of their car, ready to arrest Robie. Instead, they find his maid, who yells at them in apparent confusion. Back at the villa, Robie calmly leaves and slips onto a bus heading into the city, rolling down the road just as the police return in search of him.



Restaurant- The bus stops in Nice by the sea, and Robie disembarks. He covers his face nonchalantly while passing a patrolling policeman on his way down a set of stairs. A quayside restaurant bustles with activity. Robie notices what could be more police officers and quickly but calmly enters the restaurant before he can be spotted. Several staff members take notice of him, acting surprised to see him before returning to their duties. Robie enters a back office with large windows, giving him a clear view into the kitchen. Every cook and dishwasher inside gives him a dirty look. When he turns his head, one throws a pastry at the window, startling him and leaving a mess on the window. The restaurant's owner, Monsieur Bertani, enters and begins speaking with Robie "en Anglais." Robie complains of the police blaming him for crimes he didn't commit, claiming he hasn't stolen in over 15 years. Bertani doesn't seem to believe him. The hostess outside the office opens the door and calls for Bertani.



Escape by boat- Bertani excuses himself to answer the phone, and Robie decides to enter the kitchen. Robie looks around, most of the staff giving him dirty looks and one pouring him a saucer of milk, mocking his moniker, 'The Cat.' There's an outburst from across the room, and the hulking man washing dishes breaks a plate. He then turns to face Robie, approaching menacingly. Robie quickly reaches for a bottle of wine, tossing it underhanded to the dishwasher, who drops his improvised weapon to catch the expensive vintage. The rest of the staff laughs when Bertani returns, chastising them all in French. The restaurateur sits at his desk, listening to Robie lay out his plan. The only way to clear his name is to catch the real thief; in other words, it will take a thief to catch a thief in the act. Bertani finds himself unable to help Robie without opening his business to police attention, but he offers to let Danielle Foussard help him escape by boat. Danielle's father, Monsieur Foussard, leads Robie into the tunnels under the restaurant, where they meet Danielle just as the police arrive outside the restaurant.



Beach club- Robie and Danielle take off on a small motorboat, but a detective seems to spot them while they pull out of the harbor and alerts his superior. Zipping along on the bay, Danielle playfully accelerates, splashing seawater on Robie as the boat bounces across the open waves. Robie complains and Danielle mocks him, saying, "It must be true what they say—cats don't like water." Robie then asks her to stop calling him that, and she responds that no one should regret their past. "I only regret one thing," Robie responds. "That I ever took the time to teach you English." They talk about their past and Danielle's infatuation with Robie for a moment, the boat coming to a halt after Robie shuts off the throttle. Danielle offers to escape with him to South America, but he declines, demanding to be taken to the nearby beach club at Cannes. Danielle notices a plane, assuming it must be the police looking for Robie. Robie then ducks into the boat's tiny cabin and quickly changes into a pair of swimming trunks, while Danielle tries to look like someone out for a pleasure cruise. Robie slips off the boat at the beach club and joins the sunbathers without being noticed by the plane circling above him.



Flower market- An attendant finds Robie on the beach, telling him he has a phone call. When Robie picks up the receiver, he hears Monsieur Bertani, who tells him that the man asking about jewels and criminals will meet him outside the flower market in Nice. Robie should be waiting, flipping a coin as a signal. A little later, the camera finds Robie doing just that alongside a flower vendor's booth. The police watch from afar. A man in an English-cut suit and hat approaches Robie, asking if he has tails. Recognizing the counter signal and smiling, Robie approaches the man who introduces himself as H. H. Hughson, an insurance agent. He seems interested in the prospect of retrieving the stolen jewels, even if Robie's methods are a bit unorthodox. Hughson hesitates to give Robie a list of the items his company insures in the area, but when Robie turns to leave, he follows.



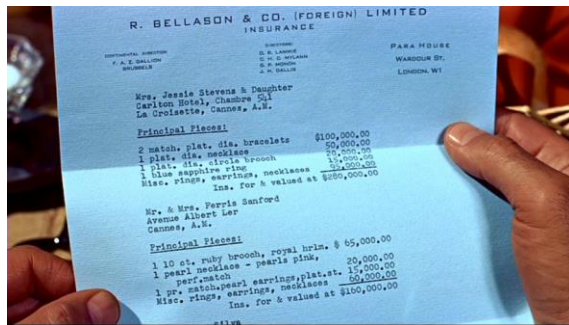
Capture- The police emerge from their cars, walking quickly behind Robie and Hughson like stalking predators. Robie notices them, walking faster, with Hughson keeping pace. After a little convincing, Hughson agrees to work with Robie, telling him to meet him at the Carlton Hotel in Cannes later that day. Robie breaks into a run, the police hot on his heels. Jaunty music plays while Robie tries to evade the police, being hampered by a flower-seller who demands that he pay for the flowers he damaged and holding him to a tree by wrapping his shirt sleeve around it. The police quickly take Robie into custody and the scene fades out.



Lunch with Hughson- The scene fades in on a distant shot of Robie's villa overlooking the valley. On the veranda, Hughson and Robie speak over a glass of wine from the former thief's personal stores. The maid announces that lunch is ready, and they move to a nearby table, Hughson making a little joke about Robie's black cat. After mentioning that the police released him with temporary immunity to investigate the robberies, Robie tries to shift the conversation to the list of Hughson's clients, but Hughson suggests they enjoy their lunch before getting down to business. As they begin eating, Hughson asks about Robie's time in the French Resistance. "Did you kill many people?" the insurance agent asks. "Seventy-two," says Robie, almost jovially, before joking, "Not one of them was insured." The conversation continues, and Hughson is surprised to learn that Robie has no sob story or explanation for his thievery, he was just "frankly dishonest." "For what it's worth," he says, "I only stole from people who wouldn't go hungry."



The list- Robie goes on a little speech about how everyone steals in some way, be it a towel or ashtray from a hotel or an additional expense listed on an expense account. “Every time an ashtray is missing from a hotel, they don’t come looking for you. But let a diamond bracelet disappear in France, and they shout, “John Robie, the Cat!” You don’t have to spend every day of your life proving your honesty,” Robie concludes, “but I do.” He then insists on seeing the list, but Hughson hesitates. “Suppose the whole thing goes wrong?” he asks, but Robie holds out his hand until the insurance agent places the list in it. Robie can’t help but grin with pleasure, saying he wished he’d known an insurance agent when he first entered the burglary business. He selects Mrs. Stevens, a rich American with a tempting load of insured diamonds in her hotel room. Hughson suggests arranging a meeting, but Robie says they can’t go about this “the honest way.”



Dinner with the Stevens- Later that evening, Hughson dines with the Stevens, trying to persuade Mrs. Stevens to place her diamonds in the hotel safe given the rash of recent thefts. She won’t hear it, saying, “I didn’t buy these things for my old age. I bought them to wear.” The waiter comes with the bill and Mrs. Stevens insists on paying, telling Hughson that he can “cheat a little on his expense account.” She then complains about tipping, her daughter eventually chiming in that she always complains about it. “I’ve just paid for the privilege,” Mrs. Stevens says resolutely before standing, saying she wants to go to the casino next. She spots Robie walking across the dining room toward the casino and comments to her daughter, “I wouldn’t mind buying that for you.” On their way to the casino, Robie talks loudly to a man selling costume jewelry, saying it’s higher quality than anything “back home in Oregon.”



“Silly society gadabouts”- At the roulette table, Robie stands with a handful of plaques, waiting to place a bet. Hughson and the Stevens stand on the opposite side, debating whether to play another game. Thinking fast, Robie drops one of his plaques into a woman’s bust, causing a small scene when he asks for the expensive chip back. Unwilling to dig between her breasts for the chip with everyone watching, the woman slides him some of her chips, and he thanks her, causing Mrs. Stevens to burst out laughing. Sometime later, Robie joins the Stevens and Hughson for cocktails, introducing himself as ‘Mr. Burns.’ Mrs. Stevens talks about her late husband, saying he would have enjoyed Robie’s company but would find the trip to the Riviera frivolous. “He used to say,” she says, “I wouldn’t be one of those silly society gadabouts if they promised me I could live forever.” She continues talking, saying how she thinks wine is silly and that she prefers bourbon. “Why wait 80 years before you can drink the stuff?”



Miss Stevens- Mrs. Stevens asks Robie to call her ‘Jessie’ before bluntly asking, “How come you haven’t made a pass at my daughter?” Robie replies politely, but the young woman is offended by her mother’s behavior, suggesting they head to bed. Robie and Hughson escort them upstairs. He unlocks and opens Mrs. Steven’s door for her, bidding her goodnight, when her daughter says she’s just down the hall. Keeping up his gentlemanly etiquette, he escorts her as well. Bidding her good night, Frances leans in and kisses Robie deeply before closing her door. Robie looks toward the camera with a goofy smile and lipstick smeared on his lips. He walks away, wiping the red from his lips with a handkerchief, before stepping outside and looking at Mrs. Steven’s room from a nearby balcony. A patrolling policeman steps into sight on the street below, and the scene fades to black.



“Somebody wins, somebody loses”- The next morning, Robie is sitting with Mrs. Stevens in her hotel room when Hughson enters with news of another successful burglary. Robie says of the thief, “Well, at least you know he’s still around and getting closer all the time.” Hughson repeats his request from the night before, begging Mrs. Stevens to put her jewels in the hotel safe. She refuses yet again, accusing Hughson’s insurance company of trying to back out of their “bet” on her jewelry. Frances enters and invites Robie to join her on a trip to the beach. He agrees and leaves to change into his swim trunks, saying he wants to inspect some villas for rent later that afternoon and pulling out Hughson’s list as a sign to him to play along. He meets Frances in the lobby a bit later and goes to the desk to return his key when the desk clerk hands him a message. It reads, “You’ve already used up 8 of your 9 lives. Don’t gamble with the last one.”



Beach- The camera pans over the teal and white parasols that line the beach. Suddenly, it speeds up, whipping right to find Danielle looking out over the sunbathers. She sees Robie chatting with Frances and gets his attention. Robie gives her a startled look, but she ignores it, trotting playfully toward the water, then swimming to a nearby raft. Robie soon paddles out to talk with her. “You performed a very beautiful robbery last night,” Danielle teases. “Is this your next victim?” she asks, nodding toward Frances. “Let’s just say she’s a useful friend,” Robie replies. Danielle talks about the police coming to the restaurant and the kitchen staff being upset when Robie got away. “It’s nice to know I have friends,” Robie says with a sarcastic grin. She warns Robie that the kitchen staff are willing to kill him. “Isn’t that amazing?” Robie asks. “The police want me in jail. My old friends want me dead. The cat wants me out of town.” Danielle suggests running away to South America before Frances comes swimming up to them. Danielle and Robie pretend not to know one another, but Frances sees through it, causing Robie some embarrassment.



“No Tipping”- Robie exits a changing hut and begins putting on his jacket. He makes a face and stops with just one sleeve on, reaching into the breast pocket and removing Hughson’s list. A watery thumbprint marks the central crease. Someone has gone through Robie’s things, and recently. Robie then returns to the hotel. A man follows him. Frances confronts Robie at the hotel steps, asking, “Do you have time for me now?” After teasing him about his faux pas with Danielle, Frances makes Robie an offer: “I have in my car a basket lunch with chicken and beer.” Robie says she doesn’t have to go through the trouble, assuring her he was going to hire an English-speaking chauffeur to show him around the villas he may wish to rent. “You have one,” Frances grins. “I’ll give you a wholesale rate, and no tipping.” “Your terms are generous,” Robie says, locking eyes with the policeman perusing him. “Too generous to refuse... I can’t seem to get out of this gracefully, so let’s go.” Robie and Frances get into her car and speed off, an unmarked police car following close behind.



“A girl in a million”- Frances skillfully guides her car along the winding seaside roads, the police following just behind them. “I’ve been waiting all day for you to mention that kiss I gave you last night,” Frances says. “Back home in Oregon, we’d call you a headstrong girl,” Robie says, and Frances begins pushing him about personal details from his life. He turns the question around on her, and she jokes about some of the details from her past, of growing up poor and then striking it rich, how the boys were always after her for her money. Finally, Robie mentions the kiss: “Not only did I enjoy that kiss last night, I was awed by the efficiency behind it... Miss Stevens, I must say you are a girl in a million.” He then asks her a personal question: “You’re here in Europe to buy a husband, huh?” Frances quips back, “The man I want doesn’t have a price.” “Well,” Robie says slyly, “that eliminates me.”



Gardens- Frances pulls the car into the drive of a large villa, and the police roll to a halt, waiting for them to exit the private property. “Are you sure this is the right address?” Frances asks Robie as they wander in the garden near the manor. “It is a little large,” Robie says, pulling out Hughson’s list, “but it’s on the real estate agent’s list.” Frances asks to see the list, but he shoves it back into his pocket, offering to take her on a tour of the gardens instead. As their stroll continues, the topic moves to Robie’s love life. He admits he’d never found the time to settle down, and Frances brings up his encounter with Danielle on the beach. She quips jealously about him giving attention to a teenager like that. Robie encourages her to ‘cut loose,’ and Frances begins insulting him. “You know what I think about you?” Robie asks her. “You’re an insecure, pampered woman accustomed to attracting men, but you’re not quite sure if they’re attracted to you or to your money.” A man walks down the stairs in front of them, and Robie recognizes him as Monsieur Bertani. They pass each other without so much as a look.



Dawdling- Outside the villa, the policemen play hacky sack beside the road when Frances and Robie come speeding out of the gate. The cops scramble into their car and drive off after them. “I’m hungry,” Robie says to Frances. “What about opening that picnic basket?” “Not until we get to the picnic grounds,” Frances smiles. Robie eyes the rearview mirror, spotting the pursuing police. “Well, then why are we dawdling like this?” Frances grins while pressing her foot on the accelerator and skillfully maneuvers around a corner and an oncoming bus, never losing speed. Even as she continues to speed up, Frances never stops smiling. She holds the wheel lackadaisically. Robie, however, can’t hide his nervous look, clutching his knees with a death grip while Frances squeals around corner after corner, still gaining speed. They finally lose the policemen when their pursuers crash into a retaining wall, having swerved to avoid a chicken. Robie speaks up, telling Frances to slow down. “And let them catch us?” she replies. Robie tries to feign innocence, but Frances won’t let him, saying, “Yes, police following you, John Robie, The Cat.” A dramatic chord plays, Robie realizing he’s underestimated this young woman.



Picnic- The car finally pulls to a halt on a scenic overlook above Nice. Frances keeps calling Robie by his real name, but he keeps trying to play dumb. It doesn't work, but he refuses to drop the act. Robie retrieves the picnic basket from the trunk while Frances tells him all the clues she put together to figure out he wasn't "Mr. Burns from Oregon." He refuses to hear her reasons while they eat their lunch, still playing the part of Mr. Burns, even when Frances points out that she knows the people who live at the villa Robie says he was interested in renting. After a point, he can't stand the accusations anymore and grabs her arm, saying emphatically, "I am not John Robie The Cat." Frances isn't intimidated, quite the opposite. She and Robie kiss passionately. Then, Frances invites Robie to watch the fireworks later that day from her room, threatening to have him paged as "John Robie, The Cat" wherever he goes when he tries to make excuses.



Phone call- Monsieur Bertani sits on top of his desk in his office, holding the phone. He apologizes to Robie, saying he pretended not to notice Robie at the villa earlier because he didn't know if he would blow his cover with Frances. From his hotel room, Robie asks the restaurateur why he was there, and Bertani replies that he was preparing for an upcoming event the homeowners hired him to cater. He mentions that there will be "many rich women" and their jewels there. "Just the bait I need," Robie says. "I suppose all your boys will be there?" "Naturally," Bertani replies, assuring Robie that the kitchen staff will be far too busy to try and hurt him. Bertani invites Robie to bring his "pretty American girl" to the restaurant for dinner sometime soon before hanging up.



Fireworks- “Bonsoir, madame,” a bellhop says to Frances while he wheels a cart with empty champagne bottles from her hotel room. She returns the farewell before turning to face the fireworks again. If you really want to see fireworks,” she says, crossing the room to be closer to Robie, “it’s better with the lights out.” She makes a show of shining the lamplight on her jewel necklace while she flicks the switch, drawing Robie’s eyes. Frances mentions noticing how he’s been trying not to look at the jewelry all evening. The fireworks display continues outside unabated, but neither Frances nor Robie looks at them. Frances keeps talking about jewels, comparing Robie to an alcoholic outside a bar. Robie laughs heartily at the comparison, knowing he has much more self-control. Frances then throws a hypothetical his way: What would he do if he were trying to steal some jewels, but the window wasn’t open? “I’d go home and get a good night’s sleep,” Robie replies, still refusing to entertain the idea that he is John Robie.



“Never had a crazier one”- Seated on the couch, Frances insists that Robie give himself up, saying she’ll help him steal jewels at the Sanfords’ annual gala. He says he can’t respond, as what he has to say would be too rude. Frances reaches out and takes his hand, kissing his fingers before sliding them under the necklace. “Hold them,” she says. “Diamonds. The only thing in the world you can’t resist... Ever had a better offer in your whole life?” “I’ve never had a crazier one,” Robie replies. “Just as long as you’re satisfied,” Frances quips back. The camera dips outside to catch several rapid explosions as romantic music swells. “You know as well as I do,” Robie says, “this necklace is imitation.” Frances leans close, murmuring, “I’m not.” They kiss passionately as the fireworks outside reach their finale.



Mother's Jewels- Early the next morning, just before dawn, Frances barges into Robie's hotel room. "Give them back to me," she says, standing in the doorway, her face shrouded in shadow. Robie doesn't know what she's talking about. "Give them back to me," she repeats, beginning to attack Robie. "Mother's jewels." After subduing her by pushing her against the wall, Robie asks what she means, and she reports that Mrs. Stevens' jewels have been stolen, and she blames him. Frances stays in Robie's room, searching for the jewels, while Robie goes to investigate Mrs. Stevens' room. Mrs. Stevens is confused as to why Frances suspects Robie, and he comes clean with her, telling her his real name and that he used to be a jewel thief. Frances enters her mother's room and shares her 'proof' that Robie stole the jewels. Mrs. Stevens disagrees, opting instead to help Robie escape when hotel management leads the police up to the hotel room. Robie slinks away into the pre-dawn darkness over the hotel roof.



Fishing- After a montage of activity in the police station, Bertani's kitchen, and Robie's villa, the camera settles on an idyllic lighthouse at the end of a long quay. A man sits beside it, a bucket of worms beside him, while he fishes in the bay. "So for three days," Hughson says, suddenly appearing on-screen, "you've been doing nothing but fishing?" The fisherman speaks up, telling him to keep quiet. It's Robie. "You still believe I did the Stevens job?" he asks the insurance agent. "Well," Hughson replies, "yes, until you sent for me." Robie tells him that he needs help. "Perhaps I need yours even more," Hughson replies. The insurance agent begins to talk about the London office when Robie interrupts him, saying he's seen someone sneaking around one of the villas on Hughson's list, saying they'll probably be the next victims. Because he can't approach the police, Robie asks Hughson to help him by telling the police to be at the Silva's villa later that evening. Hughson warns Robie that he's probably walking into a trap, but Robie doesn't seem to care.



The Silva's villa- Late that evening, the last lights go out at the Silva's villa. All is still, save for a bush here and there. The camera pans around as if looking for something, catching only glimpses of shadows moving. Suddenly, a man's voice breaks the silence, yelling something in French and Robie's name. A dramatic chord plays as the camera whips around to find someone strangling Robie from behind. Another man appears from the bushes, wielding a monkey wrench. He raises it, hesitating, while Robie struggles with his ally. Finally, he strikes, a body dropping into the water below the villa. A mass of policemen run down the steps to the quay, finding the body among the rocks: It's Foussard.



Le Chat Est Mort- The scene opens with a man selling newspapers. They bear the headline "Le Chat Est Mort." The Stevens walk by, Jessie quipping about all the people reading the newspaper. Frances interrupts her and buys a paper herself. As she reads, she looks confused. It's not John Robie's name printed on the page, but Foussard's. The camera fades in and out quickly, finding Hughson in Commissar Lepic's office. "You're positive Foussard was The Cat?" Lepic replies that he's happy to have the press believe so, anxious to close the case. Hughson demands to know if the jewels have been found in Foussard's possession, as he'd rather not give the victims checks if their jewelry can be returned. Robie enters the office, surprising the other men. After some sarcastic congratulations for Lepic, Robie has some doubts about Foussard being The Cat, especially since he had a wooden leg. Hughson holds out hope that Robie will still catch the real Cat, angering Lepic who would rather let the case fade into memory.



Foussard's funeral- At a graveyard, a large crowd gathers for Foussard's funeral. It's the typical somber affair, save for many dirty looks the people from the restaurant give Robie. Bertani moves through the crowd to talk to Robie to tell him that the police still haven't found the jewels Foussard stole. Danielle begins yelling at Robie in French, creating a scene. After several sentences, she begins speaking English: "Killer! It's because of you he's dead. Get out! Get out of here, Killer! Murderer!" Offended, Robie slaps Danielle. Several men step forward to block him while he leaves, but he simply pushes them out of his path and calmly walks away. Robie is surprised to find Frances waiting for him outside the graveyard.



Wrong about Robie- "John," Frances calls, and Robie walks to her car. "Are you going to make it hard for me to apologize?" "Not at all," Robie replies. "I'm sure you're sorry." "Till mother told me," Frances says, "I had no idea of the things you were up against. What are your plans now?" Robie tells her that Foussard couldn't have been the Cat because Foussard was staking out the Silva's villa in an attempt to kill him [Robie] for getting too close to the real Cat. Robie tries to leave, but Frances stops him. "I was wrong about you, I think," she says. Robie tries to excuse himself to catch the bus, but Frances grabs his arm. "I won't excuse you. I'm in love with you," she proclaims. Robie says that words are "just playthings," before asking to escort her to the Sanford's annual gala, knowing that she's always wanted to "see a real, live burglar in action." "Will it be dangerous?" asks Frances. "Not for tourists," Robie says before walking away.



Costume ball- The camera pans around the rooftops of the Sanford's villa before coming to rest on a large staircase where various guests enter the costume ball. Each one shows off their costumes in turn, receiving applause from the other partygoers. Several of the men at the party stand without clapping. The camera pans down to show their modern shoes against their period costumes: These are police officers ready to pounce on the Cat if he were to show his face. Finally, the Stevens descend the stairs with Robie dressed as a masked moor, all of them waiving to the crowd. "Well," Robie says quietly, "We're in. Any man without a lady on his arm can only be a policeman." "My nerves could stand a drink," Frances says through clenched teeth holding a dazzling smile. "Your nerves," Mrs. Stevens says, "and your mother."



Heart pills- At the champagne table, Mrs. Stevens begins to accept a glass from a servant when she suddenly remembers something. "My heart pills," she says. "I can't drink champagne without my heart pills." Frances asks if she remembers where she kept them, and Mrs. Stevens replies loudly, asking Robie by name to go and retrieve them for her. "I'd be delighted," he says before leaving, two policemen taking notice. The policemen flit around the party, whispering the news that John Robie is dressed as a masked moor to their comrades. Eventually, the masked moor returns, wordlessly delivering Mrs. Stevens' heart pills. "Shall we dance?" Frances asks him, and he nods, leading her to the dance floor. Dissatisfied with the champagne, Mrs. Stevens flags down a servant, asking desperately if he has any bourbon, which he quickly serves her.



Dance floor- The police observe the dance floor meticulously while Frances dances with the moor. They continue dancing even as others begin to leave the dance floor, sitting on the steps or kissing in chairs near the garden. Several such scenes quickly flash past, showing fewer and fewer dancers and guests in the courtyard until finally only Frances and the moor remain. They twirl around until the bandmaster, finally sick of playing for just one couple, cuts off the band mid-song. Frances and her escort quietly leave the courtyard, watched by around a half-dozen policemen. Two officers follow them inside, watching as they enter a guest room and close the door behind them. One goes to the nearby balcony, opens the window, and leans out to watch, making sure the moor (who they assume to be Robie) can't escape.



Francie's scheme- Mrs. Stevens lies on a chaise in the guest room while the moor begins removing his costume. It's not Robie, but Hughson, dripping with sweat. "I hope the London office appreciates what I've done for them," he says wearily. "My feet are killing me." He begins praising Francine's "scheme," believing it to have worked flawlessly. Frances crosses to the window and opens it, looking up toward the roof.



Cat on the prowl- Robie crouches behind a chimney on the rooftop, looking around then down at the courtyard while the camera pulls back. The roof soon dwarfs him. In the front of the villa, Robie spies Bertani's men packing up their things. The policemen begin getting into their cars, too. When their van begins to pull away, Robie gives up, supposing that the Cat isn't going to strike tonight. He looks displeased, beginning to creep back down the rooftop when he spies something out of the corner of his eye. The Cat prowls the rooftop with a bag full of jewels. Robie moves quickly and silently, following after the shadowy figure.



Frame-up- After several tense moments of silence, energetic music begins playing when the thief spots Robie and runs in the opposite direction. Robie gives chase. A roof tile falls and shatters on the ground. The police pile out from their car to investigate, and inside Hughson and Frances rush to the window to see what's going on. On the rooftop, Robie catches up with the Cat, pulling the mask from the figure's head. It's Danielle. She grins devilishly at Robie who shouts at her, "I figured it was you the night your father died!" Below, the police shine a spotlight on the roof. "Come down, Robie!" they shout. Startled, Robie lets go of Danielle, who hides before the spotlight catches Robie. Having spotted him, they call him by name again, saying they'll shoot him if he doesn't come down.



"What is what and who is who"- Danielle tries to creep away, but she's noticed by the police. Cornered between Robie and too high a fall, she decides to try jumping to a nearby building. Danielle lands hard, shattering a roof tile and sliding down the roof. She hang onto the rain gutter, dangling by her fingertips. In full view of the officers below, Robie catches her just as she loses her grip. A bag full of pearls and jewels falls to the courtyard, scattering its contents when it hits the ground. With the real thief in his grip, Robie demands that she confess before he pulls her up. It only takes a moment's convincing before Danielle admits to her crimes, naming Bertani as her boss.



'Mother will love it'- Sometime later, a car races up the cliff-side roads toward Robie's villa. On the porch there, Robie stands, looking out over the bay. Frances appears suddenly, still dressed in her costume. "Who brought you up here?" Robie asks. "The police," Frances answers. "And we would have caught you, too, if my dress hadn't gotten caught all over the steering wheel and gearshift... Oh, John, you left in such a hurry, you almost ran." "I had work to do up here," Robie says plainly. "Were you afraid to admit that you just can't do everything by yourself?" Frances asks. "And that you needed the help of a good woman, and you just aren't the lone wolf you think you are?" Robie repeats the question as a reply, smiling while he does so. "I just wanted to hear you say that," Frances says. "Thank you." She extends a hand in farewell, and Robie takes it, pulling her into a deep kiss. "So this is where you live," Frances remarks after the kiss ends. "Mother will love it up here." Robie raises his head from Frances' shoulder, one eye facing the camera, looking startled.

