

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
Jason Zimmerman, MA

***Young and Innocent* (1937)**

Alfred Hitchcock

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 *Rear Window*, 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 *Young and Innocent* is based on Josephine Tey's 1936 novel *A Shilling for Candles*. It is a substantial adaptation, changing the genre from whodunnit to thriller by focusing on a minor subplot in the novel involving finding a coat as evidence. Many of the novel's characters -including the actual killer- never appear in the film. Because Nova Pilbeam was playing her first starring role at just 18, Hitchcock was uncharacteristically gentle with the actress, afraid his usual methods may have affected the inexperienced actress' natural naïveté. Look out for Hitchcock's cameo as a journalist at about 14 minutes into the film.

Background Like many British films imported to the US, *Young and Innocent* was released under a different title in America: *The Girl Was Young*. The American release, bizarrely enough, is missing the important scene in which Erica and Robert attend the children's party at Erica's aunt's house. The film was somewhat mixed in its reception. The *New York Times* review declared it a "crisply paced, excellently performed film," while a writer at *The New Yorker* called the film "rather exasperating and disappointing to me." British opinions varied as well. The *Monthly Film Journal* said the film had "innumerable small touches [showing] Hitchcock's keen and penetrating observation and his knowledge of human nature." Other periodicals had far more tepid reviews. Modern audiences, on the other hand, seem to enjoy *Young and Innocent*, as its Rotten Tomatoes average rating is 7.6/10.

CINEMATIC NARRATION

We can see the effort and attention to detail Hitchcock worked into very shot of this film. His gentle hand with Nova Pilbeam paid off, as she plays a believable Hitchcock heroine. Indeed, there isn't a disappointing performance in the entire film. Many minor characters play semi-comedic roles that still get laughs nearly 100 years later. Viewers will notice Hitchcock's trademark use of windows. *Young and Innocent* also uses one of his favored plotlines, that of an innocent man forced into a quest to prove his innocence and two unlikely (and unwilling) partners who eventually fall in love. This film's boom and dolly work is simply unmatched in Hitchcock's previous films. It should be noted that the film's final scenes include extensive use of blackface, which may shock or upset modern viewers.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Robert Tisdall - The protagonist, an innocent man accused of murder
Erica Burgoyne - Young and unwilling accomplice of Robert Tisdall; also daughter of Colonel Burgoyne
Colonel Burgoyne- Erica's father and police Constable
Old Will - A homeless china-mender
Margaret - Erica's Aunt
Basil - Erica's Uncle
Christine Clay - The murdered actress
Guy - A musician and murderer

SYNOPSIS

When Robert Tisdall is seen running from the beach where actress Christine Clay is found murdered, he becomes the prime suspect in the case and is taken to a police station. Before he can be tried, however, he steals his lawyer's glasses and uses them as a disguise, slipping out from under the nose of the police. Erica Burgoyne, daughter of one of the chief inspectors, is surprised to find Tisdall hiding under her vehicle after lending a ride to a pair of officers searching for him. Through their brief interaction, Erica sees a glimmer of honesty in the young man and decides to help him hide. When she returns to offer him food, they are spotted by two officers and make a hasty escape. When Erica stops by her aunt's home to call her father, however, she is roped into a birthday celebration for a younger cousin, with Robert posing as her friend. They make their way to a small town in search of Robert's missing raincoat, a vital piece of evidence to prove his innocence. They find the coat in the possession of Old Will, an itinerant china repairman living in a bunkhouse. When they see that the coat's belt is missing, Old Will joins Erica and Robert to look for the man who gave him the coat. Old Will and Erica enter a fancy hotel ballroom, posing as guests to try and find the murderer. This proves difficult, as he is one of the performers wearing blackface. Fortunately, he has a blinking tic that Old Will recognizes. When confronted by them and the police, the musician admits his guilt and is taken into custody.

PLOT

"Don't shout!"- "Christine," shouts a man. "Don't shout!" she yells back. The two argue as a storm thunders outside. He says he's not going to accept her request for a divorce and that he "doesn't want any boys around here." Christine tries to say the young man earlier that day was a co-worker, but he interrupts her, calling her a liar. The fight escalates until the man nearly calls her a 'whore,' stopping just short. She slaps him several times. Angrily, the man exits the house, standing in the rain and watching the choppy sea. As lightning crashes, he turns to face the camera, blinking bizarrely.



Seaside- Beautiful seaside cliffs dotted with cottages appear with the sound of seagulls and rolling waves. The camera settles on the beach as a figure washes up on shore, and then a belt. Robert Tisdall is strolling atop one of the nearby cliffs and sees the figure lying in the surf. He descends quickly to investigate and is shocked: "Christine," he says, breathlessly. He looks off into the distance before running off just as two women approach the body. A passing flock of gulls covers up their cries. They look back in time to see Robert sprinting up a nearby path.



Investigation- A crowd of both townsfolk and police officers has gathered around Christine's body. Some argue about the cause of death as a detective stoops to pick up a raincoat belt, saying she was strangled by it. An officer takes a notebook from his pocket and asks who discovered the body first. Robert says he did, but the two women argue that they were the first to find the body and they saw him running away. He defends his action, saying he was seeking help to resuscitate Christine, but no one believes him. All eyes rest on Robert as he looks helplessly towards the camera. Several headlines grace the screen, all of them discussing the murder of Christine Clay.



Interrogation- Robert yawns as the camera pans out. He sits with two policemen at a table. One turns off the light overhead as he moves to open the window blind. A rooster crows outside, establishing this is the next morning. One of the detectives demands to know if the belt belongs to him, but they refuse to believe him when Robert denies that he had anything to do with either the belt or the murder. The police seem bent on throwing the book at him, twisting everything he says into motive and opportunity. They reveal the bombshell evidence that Christine left a sum of money to him, and Robert swoons.



Fainting spell- A detective dives to the floor to check on Robert. A young woman wanders into the room and sees the man on the floor: "What's happened to him?" she asks, joining the detectives. One accuses him of pretending to pass out as the girl tries several tricks to get him to come to, asking for brandy to aid them. When the officer returns with the brandy, he says the girl shouldn't waste her sympathy on Robert. The young man comes to, asking what happened. After a few moment's conversation, the girl leaves. "Who is that?" he asks the detectives, and they reply that she's the Constable's daughter.



Automobile- Outside the building, the Constable's daughter greets her father. He gestures for her silence and continues listening to an officer. The Constable expresses distaste for Scotland Yard's methods, unable to understand why they kept Robert up all night. When he asks about Robert's legal representation, the officer makes a joke about the inept lawyer they assigned to the case. Done with the report, the Constable greets his daughter, asking her to grab his case files from the car while she moves it out of the way. It seems he doesn't want his daughter's dog to dirty his clothes or bite him. She begins the process of starting the car as Robert passes behind her. The policemen usher him on as he apologizes to the Constable's daughter for being unable to assist her.



Representation- Inside an office in the courthouse, Robert sits at a table. A man enters and introduces himself as Briggs, Robert's lawyer. He sits and muses as he cleans his glasses. "We haven't had a case like this for twelve years," the lawyer says, going on about how exciting it is for everyone. Robert suggests they go over the case, and the lawyer begrudgingly says there's no rush, which surprises Robert. Briggs goes on to line up the prosecution's case, making no attempt to build up a defense for his client. "Are you representing the police, by any chance?" Robert asks eventually. The lawyer responds by asking for the pound notes left in his pockets. As Robert hands over his money, a policeman enters and calls them to court. Briggs complains that he's lost his glasses.



Courtroom- A policeman asks Robert and his lawyer to wait as another case finishes inside the courtroom. The judge finishes listening to a fairly straightforward divorce hearing and renders judgment. As the crowd attending that case files out, Robert spots an opportunity. He swiftly swings away from his lawyer and guard, following the crowd. "This is the wrong man!" exclaims Robert's guard as he grabs someone who looks like a lawyer. Robert, meanwhile, slips through a nearby door into the courtroom unrecognized. He is unable to leave, however, as proceedings are about to begin and a policeman commands him to sit. The camera follows several members of the court as they whisper to each other. The whisper slowly becomes a murmur and then a cry: "The prisoner has escaped!"



Missing defendant- The discovery that Robert has escaped creates sudden chaos. Policemen and officials sprint from the courtroom as a gaggle of others stand and file out. The lawyer, Briggs, comically attempts to read his case files by holding them close to his face and, seemingly oblivious to the chaos, begins his opening argument. Robert quickly dons his lawyer's missing glasses and attempts to leave the room. It quickly becomes obvious Robert cannot see through the coke-bottle lenses that allow the lawyer to read, but he follows the crowd.

Spectacled escape- Outside the courthouse, a policeman talks about Robert's escape with a handful of journalists. He recruits several of them to keep a lookout for a man matching Robert's description. During this chaos, Robert emerges from the courthouse. "You with the spectacles," the officer shouts and grabs Robert's arm, telling him to take a position up the road. Robert stumbles away, tilting his head up in a feeble attempt to see where he's going through the lawyer's glasses.



Out of gas- In the little motorcade in front of the courthouse, the Constable orders an officer to take his family car and travel to a nearby radio dispatcher to relay the message of Robert's disappearance. His daughter, Erica, is distraught when the officer bumbles starting the car and she takes the controls. The car silently rolls along through the English countryside, with officers pushing behind the car and Erica steering. She puts on the parking brake and urges the officers to leave, saying they'll never catch up to Robert pushing her car like that. When they express concern, she says she'll 'find petrol somewhere.'



Pigs in a cart- The officers flag down a passing farmer driving a cart. He doesn't understand what 'commandeer' means and is upset when he does. "I can't go quickly," he says, "pigs don't like it." The officers imply that their job is more important, and the farmer replies, "Pigs is my job." The senior officer checks once again that Erica will be alright on her own before asking the farmer where they can sit in the cart. He motions towards the rear where a small herd of pigs mill under a net. The animals squeal as the cops try to board the cart. One officer complains about the lack of room, and the farmer tells him the cart "can't hold more than 10 pigs" as he urges the horse onward.



“If it isn’t Florence Nightingale”- Alone with her dog, Erica begins pushing the car down a hill toward a nearby town. She is pleasantly shocked by how easily the car moves, placing one finger against it as she walks. Suddenly, Robert emerges from the other side of the vehicle: “Well, if it isn’t Florence Nightingale,” he smirks. “Don’t you realize half the countryside is looking for you?” she asks. Robert says he has decided to help her, “at least as far as the next petrol station.” Erica says she’ll have to find and tell the police, but Robert says she should thank him for pushing the car first, especially since he’s “doing all the work.”



Petrol station- In a quaint country town, Erica honks the car’s horn. From inside the house near the gas pump, a man emerges and asks what they want. He shouts comically through a mouthful of food for his young son to come and pump two gallons. The man begins to talk about the escaped man and Robert yawns, acting bored. The petrol station owner continues, saying the police chase is good for business. Erica thanks Robert for paying for the gas as Robert asks the owner for directions to Tom’s Hat, the boarding house where he left his raincoat. Erica begins to make a snide complaint as they leave and Robert murmurs, “Don’t forget: it’s my petrol.”



Old millhouse- Not too far down the road, Erica pulls the car into a drive in front of an old mill, telling Robert to get out. When Robert asks why, she responds that it’s her car. Seeing that the young woman won’t budge, Robert exits the car and ponders the millhouse. “I’ve won you over,” he declares as he approaches the driver’s side. He grins and tells Erica about ‘her’ plan to pick him up just before dark and drive him to Tom’s Hat. She presses him again, saying his situation isn’t a laughing matter. Robert responds that he can afford to laugh because he is innocent. He then asks her what she’s going to do, and she throws the car into reverse and drives away. After entering the millhouse and making his way to an upstairs window, Robert watches nervously as the young woman stops and talks to the passing police. He looks relieved as the officers pass without so much looking at the old millhouse.



Special delivery- Erica finishes a mealtime prayer as her many brothers dig into their dinner. The Constable strikes up a conversation with one of his sons about his trip to the dentist that morning. The other sons mock his apparent cowardice, throwing verbal jabs at one another as the conversation winds down. The Constable asks Erica about her car trouble earlier in the day. She says little and tries to change the subject when Robert's escape comes up, but the boys around the table want to talk about the case. Her father reveals that Robert probably only had a few shillings in his pocket and she looks shocked, realizing he gave his last pennies to help her get gas. Erica appears to feel worse and worse as her brothers continue talking about how hunger and desperation will drive Robert into police custody. She excuses herself from the table and moves into the kitchen. The scene fades away to reveal Erica parking in front of the old mill.



“Do you mind if I eat?”- Driven by guilt and sympathy, Erica approaches the millhouse with a small parcel in hand. First, she leaves the package on the abandoned millstone by the door, but she reconsiders and enters the millhouse. Romantic music swells as she looks around the dilapidated building and climbs the disintegrating ladder to the hay loft. There, Erica places the parcel of food on an old stool, knocks off some of the straw covering Robert and puts three coins on his chest. Robert wakes, smiling. “So, you came back after all. You really do think I’m innocent.” She says she’s only repaying her debt but can’t explain the food.. As he eats, he tells his story and answers questions, and it seems Erica is convinced he’s not a murderer.



Detected- Without thinking, Robert tosses some of the paper covering his food out a window. A pair of passing police officers take notice, making their way to the old millhouse to investigate. Robert is flustered when he hears Erica’s dog barking outside. The officers argue about how best to deal with the dog, the junior policeman unwilling to risk a dog bite, but compelled by his superior’s orders. This hesitation buys Erica and Robert just enough time to sneak out one of the windows. The senior officer orders the other policeman to climb the rickety ladder to the hay loft just as Robert and Erica climb around the outside of the old mill. As Robert climbs down, he accidentally kicks one of the officers in the head through the window.



“Next stop, Tom’s Hat”- “Don’t let them see you!” Robert shouts as he sprints for the car. Before he hops in, he kicks Erica’s license plate, hiding it from view. Robert cranks the car’s engine just as the police come running out of the mill. “Stop that car!” they cry as they try to pursue on foot. Erica lies on the floorboard as the car speeds away, asking where her dog is. Robert reports that the dog seems to be keeping up behind. She threatens to jump out if he doesn’t stop for her dog, and Robert begrudgingly complies. “Next stop, Tom’s Hat,” Robert says before Erica demands to take the wheel. Some construction work blocks the road at a fork and Erica hesitates. “It’s alright,” she says as Robert whistles, “I was going to take the left fork anyway.”



Erica sees it through- The car pulls up in front of Tom’s Hat. Robert and Erica hop out of the car but Erica holds Robert back: “You’d better not go in. Somebody might recognize you.” She volunteers to go in, saying, “I might as well see this through now.” The raucous laughter of the truckers inside Tom’s Hat disappears as Erica enters the dining room. She asks for a cup of tea and a piece of cake before one of the truckers calls her a ‘dainty tease.’ Another trucker speaks up in her defense, saying it’s nice to have women about for a change. They talk about trucks for a minute before Erica asks the shopkeeper about the missing raincoat. When he starts to tell her about a china-mender who had such a coat, a man seated on the other end of the room waves his finger in warning, but one of the other truckers says, “It was Old Will.”



Tearoom brawl- The two rough-looking men who tried to silence the shopkeeper approach the talkative trucker. “Shut your blinking mouth,” one of them says. “Leave Old Will alone.” After a short exchange, the other man punches the trucker in the face. The table is thrown and all the men begin shoving and punching one another. Erica is able to avoid the worst of the fight, but she’s eventually pinned against the counter by two men wrestling. Robert, unable to continue ignoring the ruckus, makes his way inside to help Erica but finds she is already behind him. As he tries to leave the fray, a man shoves Robert and he falls, hitting his head on a nearby post.



A lead- Erica focuses on Robert's injury, leading him to a nearby fountain and trying to clean the wound as the fountain squirts sporadically. The talkative trucker from inside Tom's Hat reappears with a 'gub'nor', who tells Erica and Robert about Old Will's likely whereabouts: a lodging house in Colchester. Before the trucker finishes speaking, one of the other men begins throwing punches at him, ending the conversation as Robert and Erica back away. They bid each other farewell, Robert saying he's glad Erica "took the left fork." She agrees, then grows concerned about how he'll reach Colchester. He says he'll thumb a ride with a passing truck or police car before heading off down the road on foot.



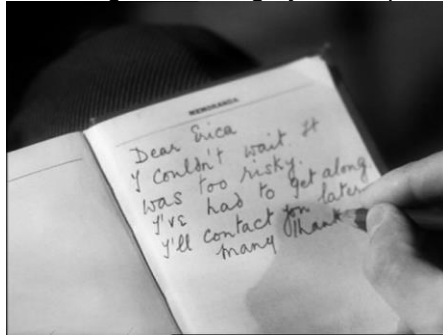
"I think it's marvelous"- The camera fades into Robert and Erica riding in the car. "I think it's marvelous of you, but you're not being very sensible," he says to her. Erica, however, has a plan. Her aunt lives nearby, and calling from the house can serve as her alibi to her father. "I need only stay two or three minutes," she promises before handing Robert a broken cup, saying it could be useful in finding Old Will. She takes it back and throws it over her shoulder with a smile when Robert mentions that Old Will probably doesn't do night work. The broken china punctures a speeding police car's tire as Robert and Erica disappear over the hill.



Miss Felicity's birthday- Erica rolls the car to a stop in front of a large mansion. "I shan't be two minutes," she promises once more as she hops out. A butler opens the door and greets her by name, saying, "It's a long time since we saw you last." Erica asks after her aunt and the butler says that it's Felicity's birthday, Erica's younger cousin. The butler insists that she stay when she says she's forgotten about the birthday, ushering her into a room where a crowd of children are giggling at a magician's performance. Trying not to disturb the scene, Erica makes her way to her aunt, who speaks so quickly that Erica can't get a word in edgeways.



“I couldn’t wait”- Robert looks impatient in the car outside. Inside, Erica finds herself roped into a game of hide-and-seek. Back in the car, Robert writes a note: “Dear Erica, I couldn’t wait. It was too risky.” As he leaves the note and leaves the car, a fine-looking auto rolls into the drive and a man steps out who recognizes Erica’s car. He reveals himself as Erica’s uncle and wonders why Erica left her friend outside, inviting him in, saying “something would be terribly wrong” if Erica forgot Felicity’s birthday. Robert seems nervous but Erica’s uncle encourages him to come in, saying it will be fun. On his way in, Robert eyes a ceramic gnome sitting by the steps.



An invitation inside- “This is a nice state of affairs,” the uncle says when he spots Erica. “You bring a nice man and then leave him outside!” Erica responds that she only planned to stay a few minutes. Her uncle insists that they both stay and enjoy the party, but Robert whispers that they have to get away. Erica’s aunt bursts through the door to start a game and sees the two standing very close. Erica’s aunt notices how strangely her niece is acting and becomes suspicious, though Robert does an excellent job covering for Erica’s nerves and produces a ceramic gnome as “Erica’s gift” for her cousin. The two couples enter the party where the cousin asks her to play a game.



Nice young man- Erica’s aunt continues noticing her niece’s strange behavior and invites her and Robert to sit with her. She looks at Erica and says, “I didn’t quite catch your friend’s name.” Erica can only stammer, but Robert chimes in, calling himself “Beechcott Manningtree.” Erica’s aunt is incredulous, but Robert smooths things over with his charm. As Felicity unwraps her gifts, Robert urges Erica to leave with him, but she says people will suspect something. They apologize to Erica’s aunt for having to leave but she asks Robert to serve some freshly churned ice cream. Robert comments on the quality of the ice cream. “What a nice young man,” Erica’s aunt muses.



Blindman's Bluff- While Robert serves the children, Erica is deftly interrogated by her aunt. She answers nervously, saying that Robert is in advertising. Robert returns as Erica's aunt feigns forgetting his strange name. "Beechtree Manningcott," he says, getting it slightly wrong. Erica's aunt plays the same trick again, sending Erica to serve ice cream as she interrogates Robert, who again gives contradictory answers. Erica's uncle brings a nephew forward who says he wants to play Blindman's Bluff. Erica's aunt begrudgingly agrees to be the first blind man on the condition that she can catch Robert. Blindfolded and disoriented, Erica's aunt can't stop Erica and Robert from leaving the party.



"My duty to tell you"- Erica's aunt finds her husband in her arms when she takes off her blindfold and asks where the young couple has gone. Erica's uncle says that they've left and his wife chastizes him, calling him an idiot for letting them go when they were obviously hiding something. She briskly makes her way to the front of the house in time to see the young couple drive off and then calls the Constable on the telephone. Erica and Robert talk about their successful ruse as they drive away from the house, joking with one another. The camera travels back to Erica's aunt and the Constable on the phone. "I feel it's my duty to tell you," Erica's aunt explains, saying Erica's at an 'awkward age.' Finding his daughter's behavior strange, the Constable puts out an all-points bulletin on his daughter.



Two more miles- "Two more miles and we'll be there!" Robert chants happily. Erica states that they've still got some work ahead of them, but Robert is optimistic everything will go easily. He says she can go to her father and say, "I've traveled far and risked much... and here is the man in all his innocence." Erica hopes that things will turn out right. "They've started to," says Robert, and Erica is confused. "You called me 'Robert'," he explains.



“Step on it!”- A policeman squints into the distance. Decisively, he steps into the road, holding up his hand to stop an oncoming car. Erica and Robert look nervously at each other before the police officer asks, “Are you Miss Burgoyne?” She responds that she is and he invites her inside to call her father when he recognizes Robert. He starts to detain him but Robert yells, “Quick! Step on it!” Erica floors it and they speed off, the policeman blowing his whistle. She starts to panic as she realises that by saving Robert, she’s made herself an accomplice. She speaks with a shrill voice we haven’t heard before: “We must go faster, faster. You got to get that coat back. I can’t go back now.”



Hiding- The Constable is confounded that his daughter could be aiding a known criminal. The police officer on the phone consoles him, saying she was probably forced to help him and they must be hiding in Ashcroft Forest. Headlight beams dance among the tree trunks as Erica’s car rolls on. A train can be heard, chuffing and whistling as the camera pans over a small town. An express line thunders past with a long, haunting whistle and the camera settles on Erica’s car nestled between several parked box cars. “It’s all right, my dear, we’re perfectly safe here,” says Robert, “We’ll hide here for a bit.”



“Better get along home”- Robert promises Erica that the ordeal will be over in just a few hours and she’ll never have to see him again. “Won’t I?” she asks. “Well, you needn’t ever see me again,” Robert clarifies. He continues speaking to her, saying he can tell she doesn’t believe everything will end or end well. “The night always exaggerates things, doesn’t it?” he says. They talk about the big meal they’ll have tomorrow after they get the coat. Then Robert says he should go to the lodging house wearing a different coat and hat to look more like a vagrant. When Erica talks about her anxiety, he says, “Perhaps you’d better get along home.” Erica says she’d rather wait and dozes off.



Lodging house- The sign and lamp for Nobby's boarding house advertise its cheap 'good beds.' Robert enters the lodging house and approaches the counter. "Evening, Nobby," he says. "I ain't Nobby," the innkeeper responds, "He's been dead since before the war." Robert buys a bed and asks if Old Will is in yet. The innkeeper hasn't seen the china-mender, but he's kept his bed open for him. Robert makes his way into the flophouse. Many men snore as Robert makes his way toward his bed, testing its mattress. Just across from his bed, he sees Old Will's unoccupied spot and moves to investigate. He decides to stay awake to confront Old Will when he gets in, but he has trouble not dozing off.



Finding the china-mender- Old Will's bed appears recently used when Robert wakes up the next morning. The din of the many men in the flophouse gathering their things and leaving fills the air as Robert makes his way to the innkeeper, asking him if Old Will's left yet. "You're his pal," the innkeeper smirks. "You ought to know." After no luck finding the old china-mender, Robert sets his sights on a nearby teacup. He bangs it against a bedpost several times but the innkeeper interrupts him: "How long's this racket been going on?" The innkeeper then calls Old Will.



"I only want the coat"- "Hello Duckie," says Old Will. "A cup wants mending?" The innkeeper accuses him of running a racket by telling his friends to break the inn's china so Old Will can be paid to mend it. Old Will tries to ask a question, but the innkeeper cuts him off, saying the old man is no longer welcome at Noddy's. Old Will is confused and asks who Robert is. After some exchanges that go nowhere, Robert tells the old man, "I've traced you for nearly fifty miles." When Old Will asks why, Robert asks about the raincoat. The old man feigns ignorance but Robert pressures him: "I'm not interested in you. I only want the coat." "Go on, Will," says a bystander, "Bash his mug in!"



“Kidnapped!”- In a moment of desperation, Robert admits that he is a fugitive and that he needs the coat to prove his innocence. This sends several men running to inform the police. A train blows its whistle and Robert looks out the window. “Erica,” he mumbles as he lays eyes on her car, “they’ll find her.” He grabs Old Will and runs from the boarding house. “Erica! Erica!” Robert shouts as he drags the man behind him. “Start the car!” He throws the old man into the back seat and the car pulls off. “Kidnapped!” says Old Will, as if the situation is only now setting in.



Escape- “They’re coming!” Robert shouts as the car gains speed. A train approaches them from the other direction, and their car crosses the rails just in time, cutting off their pursuers. The pursuing police are frustrated, awkwardly backing the car in a multi-point turn to take a different crossing. Erica guides the car down a stretch of country road as Robert turns to tend to the china-mender. Erica’s dog bites at Old Will’s coat, exposing Robert’s raincoat underneath. Back at the rail yard, the police find their route blocked and nearly collide head-first with a lumbering dairy truck. They complete another awkward U-turn only to slam on their brakes as an express train zips past.



Coat returned- Old Will, Erica, and Robert stand at the side of the road. “I didn’t know what you were up to,” Old Will says as he takes off his many layers of coats, “Coming along and saying you’re my pal.” The old man jokingly likens his situation to that of a “shy bride,” and Robert and Erica face one another. They hold each other’s hand excitedly as Erica ponders where the nearest phone box is so she can tell her father of Robert’s innocence. Then, Robert makes a shocking discovery: “There’s no belt.” Old Will says there wasn’t a belt when a man gave it to him. He goes on to say that, although he doesn’t know the man, he “blinked” in a peculiar manner. Confidant in Robert’s innocence, the old china-mender agrees to accompany the young couple, telling them the best place to hide from police would be some abandoned mine works up the road.



The old mine- Erica's car flies down the bumpy country road, the police right behind them. Erica turns off, toward the mine works, leaving the police on the main road. Unable to see the car anymore, one officer suggests they check the old mine before continuing. Erica, meanwhile, slowly maneuvers her car into the old mine tunnels. Just inside, the ground gives way. Robert and Old Will fling themselves from the vehicle, but Erica is trapped by the steering wheel. "Robert!" she cries as the car dangles above a gaping hole. After several desperate attempts, the young woman is pulled to safety. Old Will calls out that the police are here and the three run deeper into the mines. Erica, remembering that her dog was in the car, turns back despite Robert's arguing and is captured by the police.



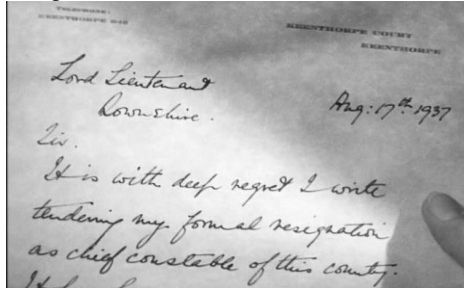
Erica's Interrogation- Erica sits at a table being interviewed by a detective. He complains that she's holding up the investigation by lying about her knowledge of Robert's whereabouts. When he presses further, Erica admits that she believes Robert to be innocent just as her father enters the room. Erica pleads with the detective. "He's much too kind and gentle. Why, he's the finest person..." The Constable interrupts her and dismisses the detectives.



Awkward dinner- The camera pans away from Erica seated at the dinner table saying grace. Her brothers all bow their heads, greedily grabbing their spoons as she finishes the prayer. Her youngest brother slurps his soup loudly, interrupting the silence. Her brothers all look at her strangely: They know what she's done and they're not sure how to treat a suspected criminal's accomplice. A servant approaches and tells Erica her father would like to see her. Erica stands despite not having eaten. She hesitates at the door to her father's study, knocking softly before entering.



Criminal offense- “I wanted us to have a little talk together,” her father says as Erica enters the room. He says he understands why Erica may not have wanted to speak to the detective, but he hopes she has an explanation for him. Erica says she doesn’t, but he doesn’t believe her, accusing her of shielding a murderer. When she says Robert is innocent, her father replies, “You know as well as I do that you are committing a criminal offense, and I’m responsible.” The Constable hands her a letter: His letter of resignation. After she reads the letter, the Constable asks that she stay in her room for a while.



Robert through the window- In her bedroom, Erica sobs into a pillow. She falls asleep, and later that night a shadow appears in the window. The window slides open as Old Will watches from below, smoking his pipe. Robert steps through the window. A floorboard squeaks as he places his foot down, rousing Erica. She rushes to him, throwing her arms around him as the music swells romantically. After a few moments, Erica asks if everything is alright and Robert replies that he came to say goodbye. He asks if the police found the belt in the coat pocket when she was detained. “No,” she replies, “nothing but a box of matches from the Grand Hotel.” It takes a few moments, but Robert realizes the significance of this discovery as he climbs back through the window. “Erica!” he whispers as he turns around, “Did you say Grand Hotel? I’ve never been there in my life!” They conclude that whoever killed Christine Clay is or has recently been at the Grand Hotel.



“Well, if it isn’t Cinderella”- The facade of the Grand Hotel appears before the camera settles on Erica seated in the lobby. She looks around for someone, craning her neck. Robert wanders around the rear of the building as Old Will walks bow-legged out of a tailor’s shop. He’s not used to wearing fancy clothes. A police officer approaches him. “Well, if it isn’t Cinderella,” the policeman says smugly. Old Will is confused, but the officer persists in his questioning. “Been watching you for the last half hour,” the officer warns. Will simply walks away, entering the Grand Hotel and meeting Erica. “I’m so glad you came back,” she says. “You’re the only one who can recognize him.” Old Will complains about the fit of his dress shoes as he sees two officers looking at him from outside. “Shouldn’t we start looking for him?” he suggests.



Front desk- “What’s that place?” Old Will asks as he points at the hotel’s front desk. “That’s the office,” Erica replies. “Perhaps they know that bloke what twitches,” Old Will suggests, heading to the counter to inquire. The lady at the desk is busy, asking Old Will to wait. Erica realizes that no one could answer Old Will’s question about a twitching man. The old china-mender suggests they look in the dining room where a crowd dances to a brass band on stage. They walk across the lobby, Old Will looking uncomfortable and out of place, especially next to the young and beautiful Erica.



Table for two- In the dining room, a waiter addresses Will. The old man looks befuddled, getting Erica’s attention who smiles and says, “Table for two.” Two police officers enter the main lobby and are directed to the dining room by a bellhop. As they’re seated, Erica whispers to Old Will that they’d better order something to blend in. Will hopes the hotel has beer, but Erica doubts they do. As he’s “the man,” Old Will suggests that he orders, comically misunderstanding the waiter’s question about the tea’s providence. He scoffs and awkwardly adjusts his paper cuffs as he turns to see the police. Old Will comments that they’ve “bitten off more than they can chew,” as he can’t watch every man in the room for a twitch by himself.



Drummer man- The camera pans across the lobby as the brass band grows louder. The camera passes through the wall of the dining room and hovers over the many dancers. The performers all wear blackface makeup and matching suits, making them look similar. But the camera singles one out, the percussionist at the rear of the stage. The camera seems to swing into his face as he looks around the room placidly, blinking as Old Will described. As the song comes to an end, the drummer recognizes Will from across the room. His blinking tic intensifies as Will and Erica discuss the peculiar twitch among themselves.



Dance- Old Will complains that he can't see everyone from their table and he needs to walk around and have a look. When Erica explains that he can't just do that without creating a disturbance, he suggests they have a dance. Erica asks if he knows how to dance and Old Will replies he doesn't but he'll try: "It's only half walking, anyway." The old man dances comically, hiking up his legs with each step like a dog with a sock on its paw. The drummer watches from the stage, increasingly nervous that he'll be recognized. He turns away and begins playing a xylophone to keep Will and Erica from noticing his blinking but earning him a confused look from the conductor. An officer watches the scene from the lobby, looking in through the window and making the drummer all the more nervous.



No good- The conductor takes a bow as the song comes to an end. After looking at his watch, he dismisses the band. The drummer plays a rimshot before he is confronted by the conductor. The conductor is upset by his improvising, saying, "I pay someone else to make the orchestrations." Back at their table, Old Will wipes himself with a handkerchief. "It's no good," he says, "The cops have been watching us for the past quarter of an hour." Erica shows surprise. She didn't think the china-mender had noticed, musing that they must be looking for Robert.



Cigarette break- The drummer stumbles through a service door behind the Grand Hotel, clutching a cigarette in his lips as he tries unsuccessfully to light it because of his shaky hands. With the help of another performer, he's able to light his cigarette. Just then, he spies the Constable and a handful of police officers marching down the alley toward him. Nervously, he retreats inside. In a dressing room, he shakily opens a bottle and spills its contents into his palm. "Shouldn't take too many of those," another performer comments, but the drummer doesn't listen. "Come on boys," says someone off-screen, "Time's up." The Constable discusses strategy with his officers while the band assembles on stage.



Losing the beat- The Constable permits the officers to do what they must with his daughter when Robert appears, saying they don't need to do anything. The police take Robert into custody as the band begins playing a new song. The music grows louder as the drummer looks weary. The combination of the stress of his potential discovery and the overdose of pills he took to deal with his shakes seems to be getting to him and he begins to lose the beat. The conductor looks angry, trying to urge him on, but he can't find the beat. The camera pans out slowly as the band and then the dancers begin to notice the drummer's strange behavior. He stands, grips his drum stand for support, then sinks to the floor, held up by two fellow musicians.



"His eyes!"- The crowd gasps in shock, rushing towards the stage to see what is the matter. "Stand back! He needs air!" the conductor cries as other band members carry the drummer to the middle of the floor. The Constable leads his daughter and Old Will away, but the commotion in the dining room distracts them. Erica wants to help when she hears someone's collapsed and they can't find a doctor. The detective holding her in custody mocks her for her attempts to revive Robert at the film's beginning and she storms off, saying, "Can't you be human for once?" After wading through the crowd and kneeling in front of the man, she notices his peculiar blinking and calls for Will. "Look, Will! His eyes!" she says as the man blinks again.



Confession- "Will someone wipe the black from his face?" Erica asks, and a band member obliges. "It's him, alright!" Will exclaims when they finish. As the drummer comes around, Erica begins questioning him, asking what he did with the belt from the raincoat. "What did I do with the belt?" the drummer laughs wildly. "I twisted it round her neck and choked her life out of her." Erica sees Robert through the crowd and rushes to him, "I found him, it's all right, it's over." They grasp each other's hands as the Constable watches. His daughter walks over to him, asking him if he shouldn't invite Robert to dinner. The Constable approaches Robert and shakes his hand. Erica beams, looking at them as the screen fades to black.



THEMES

JUSTICE

Justice/Injustice- A common theme in Hitchcock's thrillers is that civilians must break the law to correct the mistaken perspectives or actions of law enforcement. Robert's story is also one of an innocent man seeking justice, which makes injustice an obvious foil. These themes intermingle throughout the film. A small injustice of the responding officer taking the women's story more seriously than Robert's begins a cascade of injustice for the young man. He is treated as the killer quickly, deprived of sleep and food overnight, and placed before a court the next morning. Further injustice comes in the form of a soliciting lawyer, who takes Robert's last two pound notes as a retainer for his incompetent services. By escaping police custody repeatedly, Robert is technically evading justice. We know, however, that he is innocent. Only by fighting against the false claims pressed against him can the young writer prove his innocence to everyone. At the end of this film, the Constable learns that Guy is the murderer after his confession and gladly accepts Robert as a suitor for his daughter, showing that Justice has finally been done.

RELATIONSHIPS

Love- Love is a strong theme as Erica and Robert grow closer. Like many of Hitchcock's romantic pairings, their meeting is forced upon them. They resent each other at first. Then circumstances change, and they grow to love one another genuinely. Erica feels drawn to Robert's honesty and determination while Robert's enthrallment began earlier, seen on his face when she revived him in the police station. Although his irritation with her grows as they bicker, Erica soon sees the truth in Robert's innocence, and their romance blooms naturally. Robert risks capture to bid Erica farewell after she is trapped in the old mine, and he also hands himself over to the police in order to keep her from being arrested in the hotel. Likewise, Erica risks her family's acceptance and substantial jail time to find Christine Clay's true killer and exonerate Robert.

Trust- Trust is an integral theme of this romantic thriller. Robert's journey to prove his innocence is a story of gaining trust. The story begins with blatant distrust of Robert when the beachgoing women's nearly baseless testimony against him is accepted by the police. Robert's luck changes when he stows away under Erica's car. The young woman is frightened to be caught in a criminal plot, but she quickly realizes Robert's actions are not those of a guilty man. She sympathizes with him and trusts him enough to return with food, allowing him to escape from the police in her car. She shows increasing trust towards Robert when she attempts to learn the whereabouts of his raincoat and then tends to his wounds when he hits his head after a brawl. Their trust for one another fully cemented, Erica becomes willing to risk almost everything to help Robert prove his innocence. Old Will has a similar story. Not knowing who Robert is, Will is unwilling to help at first. Once he realizes Robert is a reasonable and innocent man, he puts all his efforts into helping the young man prove his innocence. Even the Constable, who pursues Robert throughout the film, grows to trust him in the final scene. He shakes the young man's hand, inviting him to dinner in a show of forgiveness and trust.

QUEST

Investigation- What would a crime thriller be without investigation? As in many Hitchcock's thrillers about innocent men on the run, the police and the lawyer bungle the investigation and court case early on. Robert knows a clue exists that will prove his innocence and does everything in his power to find it. Partly because of her growing trust and love for the fugitive and partly because of her curious mind, Erica is quick to assist Robert in his investigation, giving him several leads and ideas that prove both fruitful and detrimental to their quest. Old Will shares a similar curiosity, putting substantial effort into identifying the real killer. Even though he is an obvious amateur, he goes so far as to attempt undercover surveillance for the man who gave him the raincoat. Erica's aunt also shows a great penchant for investigation when she is able to trap Robert and her niece in several lies and spots their odd behavior before anyone else. The Constable shows us how he earned his position in his search for his daughter. Robert only barely

escapes from his tactics because of Erica's unexpected assistance. And the Constable is there to see the detectives from Scotland Yard arrest his daughter, proving his desire to see an investigation through.

ETHICS

Duty- Duty comes out as a substantial theme as the film progresses. Erica is torn between a duty to her policeman father and a duty to repay Robert's kindness for purchasing her gasoline with his last few coins. She chooses to repay her debt, making her an accomplice in Robert's flight from the law. Her duty to her father, and to the law through, is secondary to her duty to justice and eventually to love. Similarly, as a caring and faithful family member, Erica's aunt sees it as her duty to inform the Constable of his daughter's behavior. Robert feels a duty to keep Erica safe which we see best in the disaster in the old mine and when he sneaks into her home to say goodbye, risking his freedom by entering the Constable's home.

APPEARANCE

Appearance- As in many of Hitchcock's films, appearances are often more than they seem. The first scene, when Christine Clay's body is discovered on the beach, is a good example. Robert reacts quickly, seeking help, but the panic of the beachgoing women who stumble upon the body causes them to think that the helpful young man is the killer. Seeing the fear and panic in the women, the police are happy to go along with their story. Despite a lack of hard evidence and weak circumstantial evidence, they halt the investigation before it even begins, taking Robert into custody and beginning court proceedings. Erica refuses to believe that Robert is a criminal based solely on his boyish appearance while he is unconscious. For his part, Robert uses the police's reliance on appearance to his advantage in what becomes a startlingly effective escape. They're looking for a man matching his description, but the glasses he steals from his lawyer change his appearance so radically that no one looks at him twice. And the police are not looking for a man with glasses. He uses a disguise once more when looking for Old Will, and Old Will himself is camouflaged when he wears fancy clothes to evade police detection. Finally, the murderer wears blackface makeup to hide from everyone.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Robert Tisdall

Robert is the protagonist of *Young and Innocent*. He is a scriptwriter who met the actress Christine Clay in Hollywood. When the young actress turns up strangled, he becomes the prime suspect in her murder.

Determined Robert's determination is typical of other similar Hitchcock heroes. Although Robert is a very ordinary man, he possesses an extraordinary will that allows him to prove his innocence in the murder of Christine Clay. It certainly takes determination to do some of the things Robert achieves in *Young and Innocent*, such as clinging to the bottom of an automobile for some miles. The alternative is to fail to act and take the rap for a murder he didn't commit, as the police seem equally determined to try him for the crime despite his repeated pleas of innocence. We also see his determination to keep Erica safe. He saves her from harm when her car falls through the old mine and turns himself in to keep the police from detaining her at least for another moment at the Grand Hotel.

Clever Like most of Hitchcock's leading men, Robert is incredibly clever. He notices small details and pieces together information quickly, using his wit and intellect to help him make split-second decisions. Little tricks, like stealing his lawyer's glasses as a disguise, could easily backfire, but he uses the chaos of an escaped prisoner to further obscure his presence from police detection. We see his clever mind working once more during his escape from the old millhouse when he kicks in Erica's number plate to avoid police detection as they flee. He can piece together the whereabouts of both Old Will and the true killer with very little time and information. Where cleverness often results in caustic sarcasm in Hitchcock's leading men, Robert's wit is softer and more friendly.

Loyal/Trustworthy In his treatment of Erica and Old Will, we can best see Robert's loyalty. He repays Erica's initial kindness of not turning him in immediately by paying for her fuel at the petrol station with his last coins. Erica repays his loyalty with growing concern, first bringing him food and then helping with his search for the missing raincoat. This reciprocity is repeated several more times between them, becoming a firm foundation for a blossoming romance. Old Will quickly returns Robert's initial kindness and loyalty when his kidnapping results in nothing more than a returned coat as Robert promised. Because Robert is trustworthy and innocent, Old Will agrees to help on several more occasions, resulting in the positive identification of the musician as the true killer of Christine Clay.

Erica Burgoyne

Erica is the leading lady of *Young and Innocent*. The daughter of a police constable, she becomes embroiled in Robert's escape when she suspects that he is innocent. Her initial distaste for Robert slowly but surely transforms into love as they work together to solve the murder of Christine Clay.

Observant Erica is incredibly observant. She picks up skills by watching others, a talent she displays early on when she uses an old boxing manager's technique to try and rouse the unconscious Robert. She shows her skill behind the wheel and in tense situations, thanking her time around police officers for the experience at one point. Because of her observant nature, she can see that her aunt suspects something early during her visit to the birthday party. She is also able to observe several pieces of evidence taken after her capture in the old mine, leading her and Robert to figure out the real killer has been to the Grand Hotel. In the film's final act at the hotel, she observes both police surveillance and Guy's strange blinking tic before her co-conspirators have noticed.

Helpful Erica's first on-screen act is that of helpfulness. She enters the interrogation room and sees Robert lying unconscious. She tries several tricks, some she learned from watching cops deal with drunks, others from boxing matches. We learn that Erica's mother is dead, and being the eldest child, she has taken on some of the maternal role toward her brothers. She make sure that they say grace, wash before mealtime, treat each other kindly, and observe proper manners. Erica's helpful nature leads her to assist Robert with his escape and then his investigation. After bringing him food as repayment for the gasoline, she becomes more assured of his innocence and this drives her to help him with his investigation. We see her helpful attitude many more times, most notably in the film's final scene, when she breaks free of police custody to assist the collapsed drummer who turns out to be the killer.

Old Will

Old Will is an itinerant china-mender. A talkative trucker at Tom's Hat leads Robert and Erica to search for him as he is in possession of Robert's missing raincoat.

Secretive Old Will shows himself to be a secretive man through his actions and those of his friends. We see this first at Tom's Hat where two friends of Old Will's start a fight to keep an overtalkative trucker from telling Erica about the old china-mender. Similarly, the innkeeper at Noddy's refuses to point Old Will out to Robert. He keeps up this ruse until he sees Robert breaking a teacup and accuses Old Will of running a racket in his flophouse. Like most of the characters in *Young and Innocent*, Old Will also displays the opposite side of his character, coming to trust Robert intrinsically when he learns the man who gave him the raincoat may have committed a murder and framed his new friend.

Clumsy/Oafish Old Will is comically bumbling. This mostly comes up in the film's final scenes, starting with a policeman mocking him when he exits the tailor's shop. Unused to both fancy dress and his new shoes, he moves like a dog in a cast as he walks. We see this behavior arise again on the dance floor. We also see that Old Will is out of touch with some parts of society. He becomes frustrated when a waiter at the Grand Hotel asks if he would like Indian or Chinese tea; he has no clue how to dance; and he doesn't know what the front desk of the hotel is for. Unlike some Hitchcock's comedic characters, his antics do little that gets in the way of the protagonists and he is not portrayed as a drunk.

Colonel Burgoyne

Constable Burgoyne is Erica's father. Police officers under his command bungle the Christine Clay murder investigation and focus on Robert. When Robert escapes from custody, the Constable hunts for him and eventually his daughter until they are cornered at the Grand Hotel.

Caring Through his treatment of his children and some comments from Erica, we can see that the Constable is a caring man. We learn through Erica's conversation with one of her brothers that the Constable is a widower. Because of this, he seems to make as much time for his family as he can, sharing conversations and support with them at mealtimes. One of Erica's regrets for helping Robert is that her father, who's done so much for herself and her younger brothers, will share in her blame. The Constable goes as far as to stake his good name, shielding Erica as long as he can, and eventually deciding to resign from his position to keep her name out of the murder case. In the final scene, the Constable accepts Robert, shaking his hand and showing his caring attitude as he forgives the man's lawlessness in the pursuit of true justice.

Determined Much like Robert, the Constable is incredibly determined. All his men's failures to capture Robert instill a greater determination in the Constable. He redoubles his efforts and uses all of his influence to assure both his daughter's safety and Robert's capture. He goes so far as to cover for Erica's behavior when he first learns she could be willingly assisting a fugitive. While it could also be a sign that his determination was faltering, he is willing to resign his position as a constable when he learns that his daughter has broken the law. It takes no small amount of determination to uphold the law to such a degree.