

## Document Citation

Title	<b>'Female'</b>
Author(s)	William K. Everson
Source	<i>New School for Social Research (New York, N.Y.)</i>
Date	1971 Oct 15
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Female, Curtiz, Michael, 1933

"FEMALE" (Warner Brothers-First National, 1933) Director: Michael Curtiz

Screenplay: Gene Markey and Kathryn Scola, from a novel by Donald

Henderson Clarke; Camera, Sid Hickox; 6 reels

With: Ruth Chatterton, George Brent, John Mack Brown, Lois Wilson, Philip Reed, Ferdinand Gottschalk, Ruth Donnelly, Gavin Gordon, Huey White, Rafaela Ottiano, Walter Walker, Charles Wilson, Kenneth Thompson, Douglas Dumbrille, Edward Cooper, Eric Wilton, Sterling Holloway, Robert Grieg, Robert Warwick, Spencer Charters, William B. Davidson, Jean Muir, Irving Bacon, Larry Steers, Wallis Clark, Bob McKenzie, Joseph Crehan, Frank Darien, Willard Robertson, Charles Grapewin, Ethel Wales.

Women's Lib advocates should adore this film until their betrayal in the last five minutes, while Male Supremacists - who have to wait until the second half of the picture for hero George Brent to arrive and begin taming the shrew - at least have the satisfaction of the last laugh, and the knowledge that Brent married Miss Chatterton off-screen too! There's nothing radically new in its super-efficient-business-woman-tamed-by-love story -- Leatrice Joy and Pauline Fredericks had done it in the silents, and Rosalind Russell and Joan Crawford would do it in later talkies. But somehow, through its speed and bare-bones concentration of plot, "Female" becomes something of a prototype for the whole genre. Michael Curtiz keeps it all moving so fast, constantly changing locales, rushing in new characters and rushing out the old (Miss Chatterton's discarded lovers are all transferred to the Montreal branch, certainly an effective way of cooling anyone's ardour!), keeping the dialogue on a consistent level of blockbuster theatrics, that it's incredible to realise that so much plot is covered in a mere sixty minutes. Oddly enough, Warner Brothers, who had so much casual realism in their early-30's movies about working men and day-to-day living, seem to have gone somewhat awry in their conception of how the rich live! It seems unlikely that any executive as hard-headed and sensible as Miss Chatterton would live quite like an Oriental potentate. Her backyard swimming pool seems to be quite literally part of the gigantic swimming pool set from Busby Berkeley's "Footlight Parade", with a few modest adjustments, but even this palls beside the magnificently ornate foyer to her home - a sweeping circular staircase that is a mixture of old Germanic Gothic and futuristic H.C. Wells, and topped off by an organist perched precariously half-way up the wall, with no apparent means of access or retreat. However, in other ways, Miss Chatterton's tastes are quite down to earth -- for her Catherine-the-Great-like seductions of her handsome employees, she plays appropriate mood music - which nearly always turns out to be "Shanghai Lil", although "Shuffle Off to Buffalo" gets a brief look-in too, even to having Rafaela Ottiano sing the line about the scanties! Presumably the Clarke novel was somewhat more lurid. Here it is always tasteful if not convincing, and owes a great deal to the warmth and personality of Ruth Chatterton. Her performance here, even in a rather trivial role, makes one realise how superb she could have been in "A Farewell to Arms" had she played the nurse as originally intended.

Wm. K. Everson