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Film Subjects	Au hasard Balthazar (Balthazar), Bresson, Robert, 1966

Scenario: Robert Bresson

Direction: Robert Bresson

Assistant direction: Jacques Kebadian, Sven Frostenson

Photography: Ghislain Cloquet

Sets: Pierre Charbonnier

Music: Franz Schubert (Piano Sonata No. 20)

Cast: Anne Wiazemsky (Marie), Francois Lafarge (Gerard),
Philippe Asselin (school master), Nathalie Joyaut (Marie's
mother), Walter Green (Jacques), J.-C. Guilbert (Arnold),
Francois Sullerot (baker), M. C. Fremont (baker's wife),
Pierre Klossowski (corn merchant), Jean Remignard (notary),
Jacques Sorbets (Captain of police)

Production: Argos Films, Parc Film, Athos Films (Paris),
Svensk-Filmindustri, Svensk Filminstitutet. by Mag Bodard

American distribution: New Line

Synopsis by episodes:

1. A baby donkey becomes the pet of three children from Paris and a young girl from the Basque country, during a summer vacation. They baptize him Balthazar.
2. Marie, the country girl, is the daughter of a schoolteacher. Jacques, the boy from Paris, has two sisters, one of whom is sick.
3. The Parisian family returns to the city, leaving behind Balthazar. Jacques kisses Marie goodbye and says, "Until next year."
4. Title: The Years Pass. The donkey, hitched to a haycart, bolts and is chased. He runs into the empty barn on the property of Marie's father. Marie, now an adolescent, enters and calls the donkey, "Balthazar."
5. Marie's father, seen on his tractor, is proud to have completed his harvesting. But Marie says, "The fields do not belong to us. We have nothing here."
6. Marie meets Gerard and his gang, who are pouring oil on the road to make cars skid. They joke about the donkey.
7. At night, the gang sneaks up on Marie who is crowning her pet with flowers. They wonder if she makes love with the animal, "As in mythology," Gerard says.
8. Marie watches Gerard singing in church choir.
9. In the office of a lawyer. An old letter is being read to Marie's father. In the letter Jacques' father places his estates completely under the other's charge. With the death of his daughter he no longer spends his summers there. He makes it

clear that Marie's father will not have to render accounts to him. But suddenly, after years, he has demanded accounts and has accused his tenant of misappropriation.

10. Jacques arrives to apologize for his father's action. Marie's father refuses to listen to him. During his visit he sits with Marie, recognises Balthazar, and repeats his love for her. "But I am not sure I love you," she tells him.
11. Marie refuses to leave her room. Balthazar goes untended. Marie's father decides to sell him. "This donkey is old-fashioned and ridiculous. He makes us look ridiculous."
12. The baker buys Balthazar. Gerard, who delivers for the bakery, tortures the animal.
13. Gerard seduces Marie.
14. Marie's father sees her with Gerard. The delinquent accuses him of being a thief.
15. The baker's wife praises Gerard to the baker and covers up his thefts. When Gerard enters she presents him with a transistor radio and a motorbike. She begs him to stop seeing Marie.
16. Gerard gets a summons to the police station. Someone has been killed. Arnold, a hermit and drunk, has also been summoned. Gerard is dismissed.
17. The gang beats up Arnold whom they accuse of murder and informing. Arnold calls Gerard a liar.
18. Gerard and Marie have become lovers.
19. Balthazar become sick and is about to be killed when Arnold arrives and takes him. He uses him to carry tourists.
20. Night. Arnold is delirious or dreaming: "Not the scaffold. Oh my poor head...By the Virgin, Jesus, and the Saints, I'll never drink again."
21. Arnold mistreats the donkey. He escapes to a circus where he is trained to do tricks. The day of the donkey's escape we see that Marie's father has lost his case.
22. Arnold goes to the circus. He takes Balthazar away.
23. The gang arrives at Arnold's shack. They give him a gun and tell him the police are coming. Arnold tries to shoot but the gun is unloaded. The Captain tells him he has good news for him.
24. Cafe. Arnold has inherited a fortune and Gerard has declared a party at the expense of the lucky hermit. The miserly grain merchant shows up. Marie's mother calls her outside and tries, unsuccessfully to get her to return home. The gang breaks up

the cafe.

25. After the party Arnold has the lawyer pay the bills and rides home. He bids goodbye to the donkey and to a milestone and falls dead.
26. The police hold the donkey as part of Arnold's estate.
27. The grain merchant buys Balthazar, works him mercilessly, and refuses him food. When an employee suggests the donkey needs a new harness, the merchant answers, "Useless, after the first rains I'll be rid of him."
28. Marie comes to the miser for shelter. She accuses him of being stingy and dirty. He responds with a speech about egotism and greed and the uselessness of trying to be honest.
29. Marie returns home. Her parents buy back Balthazar from the miser, who cheats them.
30. Jacques comes to tell Marie that his father regrets his action. He will make reparations. He wants to marry Marie. She agrees but must first speak to Gerard.
31. The gang rapes her. When Jacques comes for her, her mother says, "She is gone. She will never come back."
32. Marie's father dies.
33. Gerard borrows Balthazar from Marie's mother for a church procession. She calls the donkey a saint.
34. Gerard steals Balthazar for smuggling. A border guard shoots at them and wounds the donkey. He dies among sheep.