

## Document Citation

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IN A LONELY PLACE (Columbia, 1950) 94 min.

Producer, Robert Lord; associate producer, Henry S. Kesler; director, Nicholas Ray; based on the novel by Dorothy B. Hughes; adaptor, Edmund H. North; screenplay, Andrew Solt; music, George Antheil; music director, Morris Stoloff; orchestrator, Ernest Gold; assistant director, Earl Bellamy; art director, Robert Peterson; set decorator, William Kiernan; technical adviser, Rodney Amateau; makeup, Clay Campbell; sound, Howard Fogetti; camera, Burnett Guffey; editor, Viola Lawrence.

Humphrey Bogart (Dixon Steele); Gloria Grahame (Laurel Gray); Frank Lovejoy (Brub Nicolai); Carl Benton Reid (Captain Lochner); Art Smith (Mel Lippman); Jeff Donnell (Sylvia Nicolai); Martha Stewart (Mildred Atkinson); Robert Warwick (Charlie Waterman); Morris Ankrum (Lloyd Barnes); William Ching (Ted Barton); Steven Geray (Paul); Hadda Brooks (Singer); Alix Talton (Frances Randolph); Jack Reynolds (Henry Kesler); Ruth Warren (Effie); Ruth Gillette (Martha); Lewis Howard (Junior); Guy Beach (Swan).

One of Hollywood's most intelligent self-analytical efforts is Nicholas Ray's In a Lonely Place. This somber and too-often realistic feature revolves around a brief and bittersweet love affair between a neurotic screenwriter (Humphrey Bogart) and his attractive neighbor (Gloria Grahame). Woven around the love theme is the depiction of the general emptiness of life in the film world--a way of life that has its main interest in profit, not art nor feeling.





Morris Ankrum, Humphrey Bogart, Art Smith, and Billy Gray in In a Lonely Place (1950).

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Scenarist Bogart is assigned to adapt a low-class novel for the screen and he asks a hat-check girl (Martha Stewart) to read it to him in his apartment. Later she is found murdered and Bogart is a chief suspect until a neighbor (Grahame) provides him with an alibi. In short order he and the friend-indeed become amorous and she helps him with his screen adaptation. Soon they plan to marry, despite the combination of the unsolved murder of the girl, Bogart's sudden proclivity for violence, and the urging of his friends that Grahame not involve herself with such an unstable individual.

Bogart's bad temper flares several times (including the savage beating of a teenager who runs his car off the road). Finally Grahame decides she must leave him, especially after he slugs his agent (Art Smith) for having taken his unfinished script. Bogart pursues Grahame, learns of her plans, and in a rage starts choking her. The phone suddenly rings and it is the police who inform Bogart that the hat-check girl was murdered by her boyfriend, who has confessed to the crime. But by this time, Bogart and Grahame realize their affair has run its course and they impassively part.

Manny Farber, in the introduction to his book Negative Space (1971), states that this film "...is a Hollywood scene at its most lackluster, toned down, limpid, with [director] Ray's keynote strangeness: a sprawling, unbent composition with somewhat dwarfed characters, each going his own way. A convention studio movie but very nice: Ray stages everything, in scenes heavily involved with rules of behavior, like a bridge game amongst good friends, no apparent sweat."

Besides Ray's crisp direction of a taut script, the picture benefitted greatly from the screen chemistry of Bogart and Grahame, and superior supporting work from Art Smith as the ten-percenter and by Robert Warwick as an alcoholic, faded movie star.