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(Sweden, 1986, 110 mins. In Swedish with English subtitles)

While Ingmar Bergman was filming (Fanny and Alexander), he also had cameraman Arne Carlsson prowling the set and filming the director and his cast and crew at work. Bergman has framed the results as a series of filmed diary fragments — with his own printed comments interspersed.

Relating to material from both the "short" theatrical version and the "long" (fivepart) TV version of (Fanny and Alexander), the film ranges from outtakes of a botched scene involving an uncooperative cat to glimpses of the painstaking attention to detail during a three-hour set-up for a single shot. Bergman himself emerges as a perhaps surprisingly jolly fellow as he coddles the actors, and his document touches on a number of themes and subjects from his most famous films.

It offers the peculiar delights of watching a staged performance from a behind-thescenes vantage point. But for many, the most memorable sequence is likely to be the brief chronicle of Bergman veteran Gunnar Bjornstrand battling poor health for a cameo role.

(Peter Hogue)