"HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID"

by Nathaniel Benchley

Several takes from the life of Humphrey Bogart.

A gasp

When Humphrey Bogart walked onstage as Duke Mantee in Robert E. Sherwood's *The Petrified Forest,* there was a stir in the audience, an audible intake of breath. He *was* a criminal; he walked with a convict's shuffling gait, and his hands dangled in front of him as though held there by the memory of manacles. His voice was flat and his eyes were as cold as a snake's; he bore an eerie resemblance to John Dillinger, to whom killing a person meant no more than breaking a matchstick. Sherwood's summary of Mantee in the stage directions described Bogart perfectly: "He is well-built but stoop-shouldered, with a vaguely thoughtful, saturnine face. He is about thirty-five and, if he hadn't elected to take up banditry, he might have been a fine leftfielder. There is, about him, one quality of resemblance to Alan Squier [the hero]: he too is unmistakably doomed."

The play opened at the Broadhurst Theatre in New York on January 7, 1935, with Leslie Howard starring as Alan Squier and Peggy Conklin as Gabrielle Maple, the heroine. The story, briefly, tells how Squier, a wandering intellectual, meets and befriends Gabrielle in an Arizona roadhouse, and sees in her some of the dreams he had once had as a youth. Mantee, fleeing the police, comes on the scene as the incarnation of ruthless violence, and makes hostages of everyone in the roadhouse. Squier signs over his life insurance to Gabrielle and then gets Mantee to shoot him, so that Gabrielle can have the money to go back to her mother's homeland in France. That is overcompression of the most radical sort, but any further explanation short of printing the entire script would be of little help.

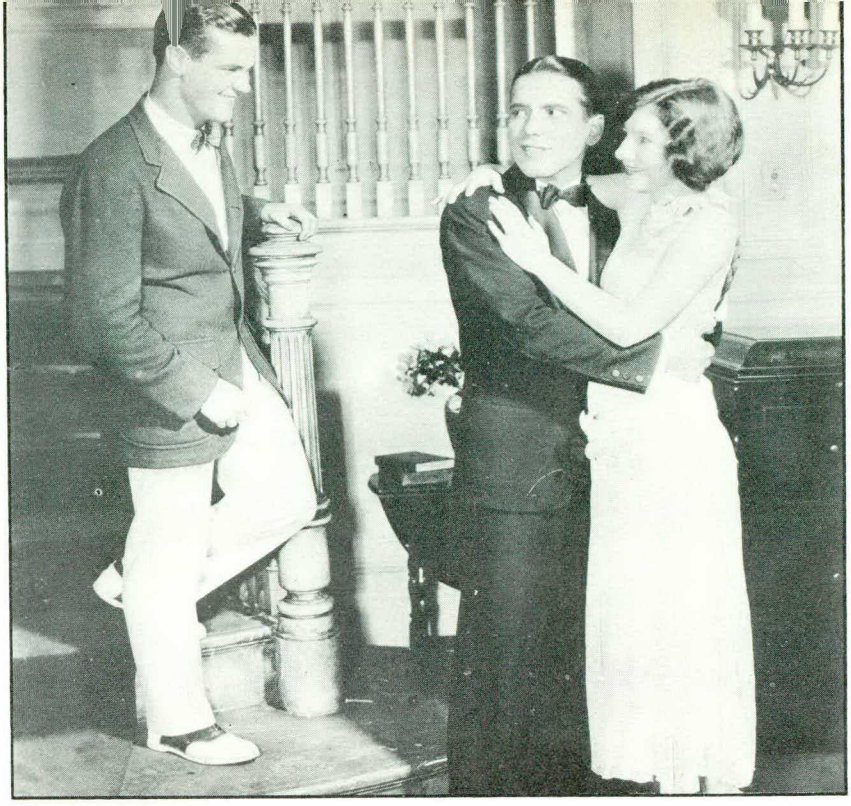
The critics threw their hats in the air. Brooks Atkinson wrote that "Robert Sherwood's new play is a peach . . . a roaring Western melodrama . . . Humphrey Bogart does the best work of his career as the motorized guerilla," and Robert Garland said, "Humphrey Bogart is gangster Mantee to the tip of his sawed-off shotgun." The play, clearly, was in for a long run.

Bogart walked, talked, and lived Duke Mantee: he wore a felt hat with the brim turned down, he talked out of the side of his mouth, and he built up a set of mannerisms to go with the character. There are very few shows that don't have some sort of trouble or conflict prior to (and sometimes after) opening night, but producer–director Arthur Hopkins had chosen his cast well. A short, round, brown, slightly bowlegged little man, he quietly mesmerized the actors into doing what he wanted, and since in many instances he had intuitively cast them against type (as in Bogart's case), the results were often electric. He told them that he collected casts the way other people collect books, and that this was the perfect cast; there was not one person in it he'd think of changing.

Their first night in front of an audience had been in mid-December at the Parsons Theatre in Hartford, and there were two things that astonished the company. One was the amount of humor in the script—lines took on a new meaning, which they'd missed in rehearsal—and the other was the literal gasp that went up when Humphrey made his entrance. John Dillinger was very much in the news at the time, having recently escaped from prison, and to some people it seemed that he had just walked onstage. The prison pallor, the two-days' beard, the gait, the mannerisms—everything about Bogart was menacing, evil, and real. The company was to hear that gasp every night throughout the run, but the first one was the one they still remember.

The trouble is, he's an actor

Jack Warner, the Hollywood brother of the Warner Brothers production firm, didn't believe Bogart had any romantic potential, and no matter how hard he fought for better parts, Warner always had the box-office figures to but-



From left to right: Humphrey Bogart in the Navy in 1919; with Paul Kelly and Mary Phillips in "Nerves," 1923; in "Virginia City," 1940; with his third wife, Mayo Methot.

tress his defense of using Bogart in gangster roles.

Though Bogart complained bitterly about casting, he seldom refused a part, and as his list of credits grew, the gangster image became overpowering. Late in 1940, he made a personal appearance at a Broadway movie house in New York, and his act started with a darkened house while one after another of his death scenes was flashed on the screen. Then the house lights came up, and there he was, lying flat on his face on the stage. He rose, smiled, said, "It's a hell of a way to make a living," then dusted off his hands and went into a brief routine. It was the first time most people had seen the cheerful side of him, and the effect was startling. Hordes of people, the majority of them women, mobbed his dressing-room door, and Mary Baker (who, with Sam Jaffe, was Bogart's agent) put through a triumphant call to Jack Warner, announcing that his "nonromantic" actor was besieged by slavering females. Warner's reply is not recorded.

Probably the best way to illustrate his public image at that time is to reprint, from the Sunday drama section of the New York *Herald-Tribune* on December 8, 1940, the comments of a reporter who interviewed him:

> . . . There has been a lot written about the fact that Mr. Bogart started his dramatic career by coming onstage with a tennis racquet and inviting some of the handsomer males off into the wings for a few sets; the handouts have insisted that he is crazy about the color brown and about gladioli, and the whole idea has been that he is a shy little mouse when he isn't in front of the camera and shooting guns at other mobsters. I know what that is a lot of.
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> Not that he should be locked up on the spot—he is a law-abiding, congenial, and, all in all, a very nice person—but the idea that he is not dangerous is one of those mistakes that should have been rectified long ago.
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> The trouble is, he is an actor. Not that this news will knock anyone over backward, but when he feels so inclined he will slip into one of his screen parts, just for the fun of it, with the result that the living life is frightened out of the people in his immediate vicinity.
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> The first time I ever saw him I was with someone who knew about this and who decided to put on a little show for the benefit of the people who were busying themselves with enjoying their dinners. He went up to the bar, and tapped Bogart on the shoulder. "All right," he said. "Finish your drink and get out of here. We don't want you in this place."
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> Bogart looked around, slowly and ominously took his cigarette out of his mouth and flipped it on the ground, and moved up so that their faces were eight inches apart. He squinted slightly as he spat out the last of his cigarette smoke. A waiter looked nervously at the bartender, who reached one hand under the counter.
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> "Listen," said Bogart, "I'm staying here, and if you don't like it you can move along. This is my territory and you know it. Or do I have to prove it to you?"
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> The nearest person at the bar slid back a couple of yards, his eyes popping, and a few of the other guests began nervously to get themselves behind the furniture.
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> The whole thing blew over when Bogart broke down and began to laugh, but I learned later that these two had on occasion come to blows, pulling

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their punches but pretending that they were cutting each other to ribbons.

As though this weren't enough, Bogart has a wife, Mayo Methot, an actress, who joins whole-heartedly in these little forays. And if anyone wasn't convinced at the beginning of one of these scenes, he certainly would be by the sight of a beautiful woman hysterically trying to separate the combatants and telling them that she hates the sight of two men fighting over her.

On the occasion of my so-called interview the first part of the evening passed comparatively quietly. A Washington correspondent also was on the scene, but he did nothing but request "Lover" from the pianist all evening, so there was no fight from that quarter. Finally, after all the other guests had left, a waiter gave us our check, which Bogart immediately appropriated. I do not mean to imply that I broke my arm grabbing for the check (we had been there four hours), but somehow a harsh word was passed, and in a flash Bogart stood up, dropped his coat, and lunged at me, but not before Mrs. Bogart had thrown herself between us.

"Stop it!" she pleaded. "Boys, please stop it! No . . . I can't watch . . . Bogie, don't hit him—he's young . . . for my sake don't hit him . . ."

For three horrible seconds she had me convinced. In those three seconds I remembered "The Petrified Forest," "Dead End," "Kid Galahad," and a few more such cheerful episodes, and it seemed to me perfectly possible that an actor might be influenced by the parts he played. . . .

Lisp

Bogart served in the Navy at the close of World War II, and during this period the incident occurred that literally left him scarred for life. In later years, publicity releases and program notes would say that his lip was cut by a piece of shrapnel while he was manning the wheel of the *Leviathan,* or by a wood splinter torn loose by shrapnel; these ignored the fact that the war had been over for sixteen days when he reported aboard ship, and that even the most delayed-action shrapnel would have had to be traveling in a vertical line, either up or down, to nick the right corner of his upper lip and leave the famous scar. What actually happened was that, while waiting out his period of shore duty, he was assigned to take a prisoner (Navy, not German) from somewhere in the South up to Portsmouth Naval Prison in New Hampshire. The man was handcuffed, though not to him, and when they changed trains in Boston, he asked Humphrey for a cigarette. Humphrey cheerfully complied, and while he was producing a match the man raised his manacled hands and smashed him across the mouth, and fled. Humphrey, his lip torn almost off, whipped out his .45 and dropped the man as he ran, and by the time the prisoner was secured in Portsmouth, and Humphrey had been treated by a Navy doctor, he had the makings of a lifelong scar.

The doctor was apparently a frustrated sailmaker, and three subsequent plastic-surgery jobs failed to undo the damage he had done when the wound was fresh. It was concealable onstage, but the probing eye of the camera never failed to show it up, and it lent an air of menace to an otherwise pleasant face and was probably responsible for his slight lisp. The lip was always big, and the lisp might have occurred without the scar, but Stuart Rose says flatly that Humphrey did not lisp when he first met him. Looking at him in movie close-ups, when he is enunciating clearly, you can see the lip moving out, almost like a proboscis, to envelop a word, and then returning to lie wetly against the teeth while a new word is being formed.

Barbs

Bogart's combativeness, which increased over the years, took many forms. Sometimes it was just testing, to see how a person would react; sometimes it was a definite needle, to puncture pomposity; sometimes it was a probe, to find out hidden fears or weaknesses; and sometimes it was simply for the fun of seeing the fur fly. His detractors pointed out that no matter how loud or tough the talk, he never struck a blow and always avoided being hit himself, and in this they were correct, because that was the point of the game. His friend Nunnally Johnson, the screenwriter and director, overheard him explaining it to Lauren Bacall at Romanoff's one day at lunch, when she had observed that one of these days he was going to get his bloody head knocked off.

"You don't understand," Johnson remembers him saying. "It's an art. You do it sitting down or with glasses on, and bring it just to the point where he's going to slug you, then you stop. It's the knowing where to stop that's the main thing."

Bogart's judgment of people was often based on how they responded to his barbs. When he first met Frank Sinatra, at The Players restaurant on Sunset Strip, he said, "They tell me you have a voice that makes girls faint. Make me faint." Sinatra replied to the effect that his opening was still a week off and he couldn't sing before then, so the matter was dropped. They became close friends, with a relationship that cast Bogart in an almost paternal role. Sinatra is noted for behaving precisely as he pleases, but in Bogart's company he was on his good behavior and was his most charming—which is as charming as the law allows.

Sometimes the targets were worthy of Bogart's testing, and sometimes they weren't; a lot depended on how much he'd had to drink. As an example of pointless needling: he met, at a Sunday-night party at the Jaffes', a writer and book reviewer named Ben Ray Redman. He brooded over the name for a while, then said, "You know the trouble with you? You're just another of these goddam three-name writers—Clarence Budington Kelland, Thyra Samter Winslow, Mary Roberts Rinehart"—carried away with himself, he spun on—"Walter Pritchard Eaton, Stephen Vincent Benét, Margaret Culkin Banning, Celia Caroline Cole, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Hannibal Hamlin Garland, Louisa May Alcott, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings"—until finally the host stepped in and put a stop to the harangue. Redman, powerless to deny the sin of having three names, hadn't been able to say a word.

Occasionally Bogart would say something intended simply to get a rise out of a person, the nature of the bait always being governed by the amount of Scotch and/or Drambuie he'd consumed. At a party at Nunnally Johnson's, he went up to John Steinbeck and said, "Hemingway tells me he doesn't think you're all that good a writer." Steinbeck, who worked on the theory that a man's threshold of insult is directly proportionate to his intelligence, simply grunted and turned away, leaving Bogart with nothing more to say. And, on a more savage level, he accosted Lucius Beebe at "21," when Beebe and two friends were standing at the bar. For Bogart it was the end of a long lunch, and he brought his Drambuie with him as he came to the bar.

"Excuse me," he said to Beebe. "Are you a homosexual?"

Beebe looked at him coldly. "I don't see what possible difference that makes to you," he replied.

"We have a bet on at our table," Bogart said. "Are you, or aren't you?"

"Then, if you insist," said Beebe, "no."

All three men stared at Bogart in silence, and he turned to one of the others. "Are you?" he asked.

"Only on Wednesdays," the man replied.

"And you?" he said, to the third.

"I try not to be."

By now aware that he was out on a limb with no place to go, Bogart put one hand behind his head, said, "Well, *I* am," and danced away. The three men turned back to the bar.

After about five minutes, Beebe said, "I think that was a rather rude question our actor friend asked," and with that he finished his drink, paid the check, and left.

(Apropos the Drambuie, once when the Bogarts had gone to New York, a friend in Hollywood went into Romanoff's and asked John, the bartender, if they had yet returned. John glanced at the oversized Drambuie bottle on the back bar, quickly estimated its contents, and said, "No, sir. Mr. Bogart's not back yet.")

He once said that "the only reason to make a million dollars in this business is to be able to tell some fat producer to go to hell," and it was in the needling of the top moguls that he took his greatest delight. Sam Jaffe once got a call from Jack Warner complaining that at a big party Bogart had called him a creep. "You've got to do something about him," Warner said. Jaffe protested that he couldn't be responsible for Bogart's actions off the lot, but the next time he talked to him he told him, "Jack's upset because you called him a creep."

"Well, isn't he?" Bogart replied.

"That's not the point," said Jaffe.

"A man's either a creep or he isn't," said Bogart, and he continued to call Warner a creep every time he saw him thereafter.

Another, lesser mogul got the Bogart treatment in what turned out to be his jugular vein. He was a producer who was kept on the payroll by contributions from his mother, and he prided himself

not only on his *bons mots,* but also on the people to whom he had said them. He was a combination self-quoter and name-dropper, and Bogart destroyed him by saying, "You know, you're a terrible bore." The man turned ashen and began to foam at the mouth, and when he later complained to Jaffe, and Jaffe relayed the complaint to Bogart, the result was the same as in Warner's case.

"Is he a bore, or isn't he?" was all that Bogart said, and that ended the conversation.

Another of his antagonists was a rotund agent named Paul Small (of whom it was said, "Paul Small casts a small pall"), and his needling of this individual reached a point where Small, enraged as a woman whose honor has been questioned, slapped him in the face. Bystanders pulled Small away and took him to an adjoining room, where they tried to calm him by telling him soothing things and saying this was just Bogart's way of having a little joke, but the more they explained, the madder Small became, until he finally tore himself clear, ran into the other room, and slapped Bogart a second time.

Usually, however, these skirmishes ended short of physical violence, which was as Bogart intended, and sometimes his dodges to avoid combat were elaborate. At a party (these episodes usually happened at parties) he goaded the writer Julian Claman into stepping outside, "where we'll settle this right here and now," and when they reached the lawn he put an arm around Claman's shoulders and said, "Let's put on ladies' hats, and go back and make 'em all laugh." Another time, when invited outside, he told his opponent to go out and he'd be right with him; instead, he went to the bar and started a conversation with someone else, and when, several minutes later, the first man came looking for him, Bogart raised his glass and said, "Hi, there! Come in, and have a drink!" Probably the closest he ever came to extermination was at his own poolside, when he ripped into his friend and neighbor Sid Luft over a fancied wrongdoing (he had given Luft some business advice, which Luft hadn't followed). Luft, a man with an explosive temper and fists like Virginia hams, finally started for him, but before he got within range, Bogart put out a hand and said, "All right, maim me—kill me if you want—but remember, I'm your brain. I do your thinking for you." Incredibly, Luft subsided, but it would have been a gory mess if he hadn't.

Exactly why he took pleasure in this form of recreation is anybody's guess. It's possible that when he'd been drinking, everybody began to look like a phony, but that isn't the whole answer; the only thing that's certain is that he was more savage drunk than sober. This leads to the too easy answer that there was a Jekyll–Hyde syndrome brought on by alcohol, but that also leaves a lot of questions unanswered. Some people will say they never saw him mean, and others will say they never saw him anything but; there are those who will swear that his language was immaculate, and those who remember the occasional barracks language around the house; and there are women who recoil at the mention of his name, and women who remember him with warmth and affection. Betty Comden, the playwright, found him, in her words, "gallant and tender, attentive and adorable." (He used to ply her with stingers, saying, "I like that foxy face," which happens to be a perfect description; she has the face of a very beautiful fox.) A final possible answer is that he basically loathed the insincerity, sycophancy, and cowardice in Hollywood, and liked to think of himself as a rebel. The real reason is probably a combination of all of the above, with an additional X factor thrown in for good measure.

When I was working in Hollywood, in 1955 and 1956, my wife came out to visit for a couple of weeks before Christmas. She had never met Bogart—or, if she had, only in passing—and she was terrified of his reputation for needling newcomers.

"What will I do if he picks on me?" she said. "I can't handle that sort of thing."

"If he picks on you, you pick right back," I told her. "Tell him you don't take any crap from bald men—tell him to put on his wig, and then you'll talk."

"I couldn't," she said. "I'd die."

We didn't run into the Bogarts until one night, when we were leaving Romanoff's after dinner, we came across them with a group of friends at the bar. Bogie beckoned us to join, and when the introductions had been made he said, "All right. Everybody back to our house."

"I have to go back to the Chateau for a minute," I said, referring to the Chateau Marmont, where we were staying. "We'll join you later."

"You go where you want," he said. "Mrs. Benchley's coming with me."

Trembling, Marjorie got into his black Thunderbird with him, and as they drove the few miles to his house he told her how glad he was she'd come out, how good he knew it would be for me, and if there was ever anything she needed, or if she wanted any help or advice, she was to call on him immediately. He was, in short, all the adjectives Betty Comden had used plus a few more; in the following days he took her on his boat, he talked with her about life and bringing up children, and by the end of her stay in Hollywood she was more than a little in love with him.

The next time I saw him, after she'd gone back, I said, "I think I should report that my wife has a thing for you."

He was embarrassed. "Tell her I'm really a shit," he mumbled. "Tell her I was nice only because she's new out here."

You must remember this

For the benefit of Sherpas, the newly born, and others who may not have seen *Casablanca,* a brief summary of the story would seem to be in order. Bogart played the part of Rick, a cynical American adventurer who owns a nightclub in Casablanca, a way station for refugees trying to escape to the New World from the Nazis. The time is early December, 1941; Pearl Harbor has not yet been attacked, and many Americans are still uncommitted. Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman) shows up at the nightclub with her husband, Victor Laszlo (Paul Henreid), a Resistance fighter who is fleeing the Nazis. At the time of the fall of Paris, she had a brief but intense affair with Rick; she thought Laszlo dead, and when she found he was alive she vanished without explanation, leaving Rick understandably wounded and bitter. Now it turns out that Rick has two exit visas, which will allow Ilsa and Victor to escape, but the memory of the jilting is still fresh, and he is tempted to withhold them. At a clandestine meeting Ilsa tries to get them by threatening him with a gun, then says she is still in love with him; she says she left him once but could never do it again, and is now prepared to run away with him. He pretends to agree, but in the end he gives the passes to Ilsa and Victor, allowing them to escape.

The story was originally a play, *Everybody Goes to Rick's,* by Murray Burnett and Joan Alison, and it died before it ever reached Broadway. But Warner Brothers had already bought the screen rights, so to salvage what they could, they assigned Julius J. Epstein and his brother Philip to try to put something together. Hal B. Wallis, the producer, wanted Miss Bergman for the female lead, but she was under contract to David Selznick and could be loaned out only on the promise of a superior picture, so Wallis sent the Epsteins over to Selznick to ad-lib the property into something impressive. This they did, although basically all they had were a few scenes and ideas for a few more. Another screenwriter, Howard Koch, was assigned to help out, and then (this was shortly after Pearl Harbor) the Epsteins were given leave to go to Washington to work on the "Why We Fight" series, under the newly minted Major Frank Capra. This left Koch alone with the script for about four weeks, trying to put together something that looked like a story, and then the Epsteins returned and all three writers pitched in—not necessarily in total harmony. By the time shooting started, only half the screenplay was finished.

The actors had done their homework as best they could. Miss Bergman makes it a rule, if she doesn't know her leading man, to see his pictures before she meets him so she'll know what to expect, and in Bogart's case she saw *The Maltese Falcon* over and over again. She was, if not nervous, at least apprehensive about meeting him because of his reputation; when they met, he was kind and gentle and considerate, and not at all what she'd expected. But he was also grumpy and upset, because of the condition of the script, and he spent most of his lunch hours wrangling with Wallis over what was going to happen to the story. (Those lunch hours he wasn't with Wallis he was likely to be hounded by his wife Mayo, who was keeping a hawk eye on him and Miss Bergman and doing nothing to improve dispositions.)

Bogart's preparation for the picture had been of another sort. Before shooting began, Mel Baker (Mary Baker's husband) said to him, "This is the first time you've ever played the romantic lead against a major star. You stand still, and always make her come to you. Mike [Curtiz, the director] probably won't notice it, and if she complains you can tell her it's tacit in the script. You've got something she wants, so she has to come to you." Bogart absorbed the advice in silence, and he followed it in every scene except one. In the scene where she pulls the gun on him, he says, "All right, I'll make it easier for you. Go ahead and shoot. You'll be doing me a favor." Then the stage directions read *Rick walks toward Ilsa. As he reaches her, her hand drops down.* That was the only exception.

Generally speaking, the shooting was a shambles. It was done on a day-to-day basis, with Curtiz scanning the various scripts as they came hot from the typewriters, and saying things like, "This looks interesting. Let's try this one today." The actors, without the security of a finished script or even the knowledge of where they were heading, became jittery and upset, and when they asked Curtiz for guidance he'd simply say, "Actors! Actors! They want to know everything!" It wasn't known whether Miss Bergman would end up with Bogart or Henreid, and when she told Curtiz she *had* to know, in order to be able to play the scenes correctly, he replied, "We don't know. Just play it day to day, and we'll see what happens." One day, when Bogart appeared for shooting, Curtiz told him, "You've got an easy day today. Go on that balcony, look down and to the right, and nod. Then you can go home."

"What am I nodding at?" Bogart asked. "What's my attitude?"

"Don't ask so many questions!" Curtiz replied. "Get up there and nod, and then go home!"

Bogart did as he was told, and didn't realize until long afterward that that nod had triggered the famous "Marseillaise" scene, where Henreid leads the nightclub orchestra in drowning out some Germans who'd been singing "Die Wacht am Rhein." It's a scene that, even after thirty years, prickles the scalp and closes the throat, and for all Bogart knew he was nodding at a passing dog.

There was still the matter of the ending. The

convolutions of the plot are such that it isn't until almost literally the last minute that Rick tells Ilsa he isn't going with her; with everything except that final moment shot and in the can, it was clear that a decision had to be made. The decision was typical: shoot two endings, and see which feels better. (Henreid, incidentally, had been loud in his insistence that he get the girl; to him, there were no two ways about it.) So they wrote two endings; they shot the first, and that was it. It was perfect because everyone except Henreid had been wanting the other one, and yet recognized that it couldn't happen. If Bogart had got the girl he would have appeared somehow sleazy and underhanded; by giving her up he made a noble gesture, aided the forces of good, and had a beautiful exit line as he walked off into the night with the chief of police. It was probably just as well the actors didn't know where they were headed, because that made the final twist all the more of a jolt for the audience. It was the head-versus-heart dilemma, played out to the final scene.

In addition to the principals, there was a first-rate supporting cast. Claude Rains played the corrupt Vichy chief of police, and the others included Sydney Greenstreet and Peter Lorre (both of whom had been with Bogart in *The Maltese Falcon),* as well as Conrad Veidt, S. K. Sakall, and Dooley Wilson, the pianist who played the unforgettable "As Time Goes By."

And this would be as good a time as any to settle the matter of "Play it again, Sam." In spite of the fact that Woody Allen wrote a play by that title, in which he saw himself as the epitome of everything Bogartian, and in spite of the fact that people swear they heard it in the picture, those exact words were never spoken. When Ilsa requests the song, she says, "Play it once, Sam, for old time's sake," and when he demurs she says, "Play it, Sam. Play 'As Time Goes By.'" Then, later, Rick says, "You played it for her and you can play it for me," and when Sam is still unwilling, he snarls, "If she can stand it, I can. Play it!"

By now this straightening out of the record is undoubtedly too late, and "Play it again, Sam" has joined "I knew him well, Horatio" in the lexicon of misquotations.

On November 8, 1942, Allied forces landed on the coast of French North Africa, specifically at Oran, Algiers, and Casablanca. It was as though Warner Brothers had planned the invasion; eighteen days later, on Thanksgiving Day, *Casablanca* opened at the Hollywood Theatre in New York. As if that weren't enough, its general release came on January 23, 1943, in the middle of the conference between Roosevelt and Churchill at Casablanca. Because of wartime security, the conference couldn't be publicized at the time, but its subsequent news stories did nothing whatsoever to harm the picture. If anything, they tended to point up the allegorical similarity between Rick and Roosevelt: the uncommitted American who stands by while others do the fighting, and then, at the proper time, steps in and turns the tide. A great deal of allegory has been read into *Casablanca* since its opening, much of it pure drivel, but the Rick–Roosevelt similarity is too strong not to merit passing mention.

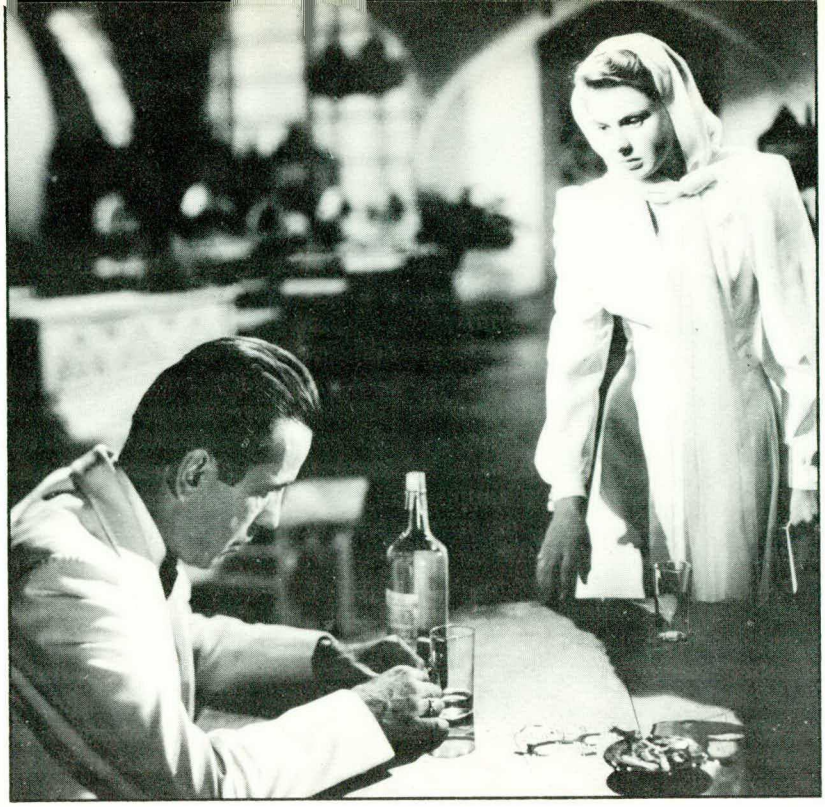
The critics filled the air with flaming pinwheels of praise. The picture was nominated in eight categories of the Academy Awards and won in three: Best Picture, Best Screenplay, and Best Director. It brought Bogart his first nomination as Best Actor, but he lost out to Paul Lukas in Lillian Hellman's *Watch on the Rhine.* Although *Casablanca* has since, in cold retrospect, been called "the best bad picture ever made," there have been no second thoughts about Bogart; his image has grown to a point somewhere near idolatry, and shows no immediate sign of diminishing. His own reaction to his new status was typical.

"I didn't do anything I've never done before," he replied once, when the subject of his romantic qualities came up. "But when the camera moves in on that Bergman's face, and she's saying she loves you, it would make anybody look romantic." There is more truth to that remark than most actors would care to admit.

The British Broadcasting Corporation recently did an hour-long special on Bogart's life, and on the subject of him as a romantic, they cited Jack Warner's skepticism. Warner is supposed to have said, before *Casablanca* was filmed, "Who the hell would ever want to kiss Bogart?" and Miss Bergman is supposed to have replied, "I would." It made the point nicely, and while Miss Bergman has issued no flat denials, her rejoinder is to smile and say she doesn't recall ever making such a statement. Her own statement is much more eloquent; when pressed for an interview about Bogart, she replied with a remark that could very easily be the title of a book: "I kissed him, but I never really knew him."

Love and marriage

Generally speaking, domestic squabbles make dismal reading and are best left unrecorded, but Humphrey Bogart's fights with his third wife, Mayo Methot, were so frequent and so spectacular, and with no apparent damage to their marriage, that they deserve a brief examination. Fights of such intensity and regularity would have dissolved most marriages within a month. They were mostly started by Mayo—the violent part, at any rate—and usually when she was in her cups, but there were too many exceptions to make this hold up as a flat rule. As an example, they were awakened one morning, in their room at



From left to right: Bogart with Ingrid Bergman in "Casablanca," 1943; with Lauren Bacall in "Dark Passage," 1947; with Lauren Bacall and their two children, 1954; in "The Desperate Hours," 1955.

the Gotham Hotel in New York, by a telephone call from their writer friend Daniel Mainwaring. Mayo took the phone, then reached it over to Bogie, said, "It's for you," and dropped the phone in his face. He slugged her, and they leaped from the bed, stark naked, and began to throw things at each other. The skirmish went on for several minutes, and then Mayo picked up a potted plant, and as she got it above her head it overbalanced her, and she crashed heavily to the floor. Convulsed with laughter, Bogie fell back on the bed, retrieved the telephone, and said, "Yeah, Danny, what did you want?" The day then went on as though nothing had happened.

They became known as the Battling Bogarts, and things finally reached the point where Mac Kriendler of "21" barred them as a couple from the establishment. Singly they were welcome, he said, but together they were more than any self-respecting restaurateur cared to handle. (It was not a ban that lasted long.) Mary Baker has a theory that these fights were like the mating dance of the whooping crane, as a sort of prelude to love, but again there are obvious exceptions—such as the Thanksgiving when the Raymond Masseys were having dinner with them. As Mayo appeared with the turkey Bogie made some now-forgotten remark, and she hurled the turkey, platter and all, at his head. He grinned, wiped the debris from his face, and they picked everything off the floor, rearranged it on the platter, and ate a cheerful meal.

There are occasional signs that they even took pride in these fights, although the reason is obscure unless it was that they fitted into the gangster image that was then his stock in trade.

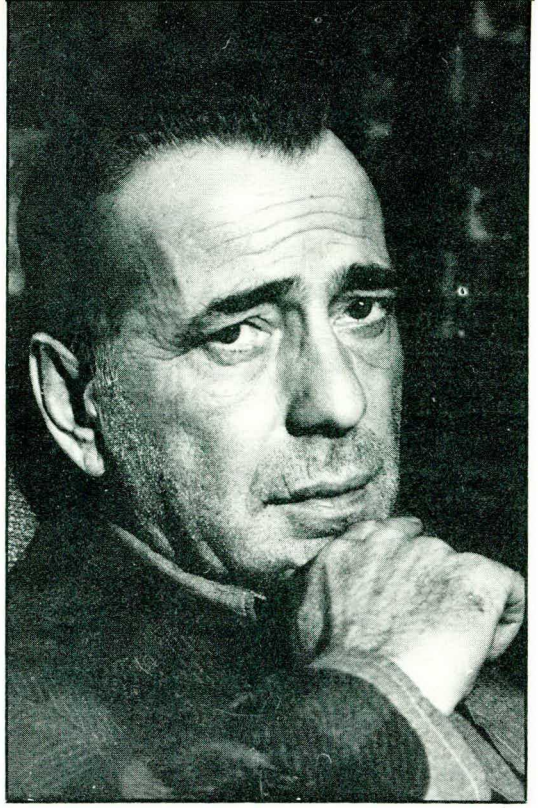
So it was not for nothing that Humphrey nicknamed Mayo "Sluggy," a name which, in the true spirit of a yachtsman, he also gave his first boat. The Bogarts' neighbors on Horn Avenue remember night after night made hideous by the shouting and breakage, with an occasional and spectacular appearance of the combatants—such as the time they emerged from the house, Mayo leading him with a rope around his neck, while he shouted, "I'm going to hang you!"

Another, more serious fight had unexpected consequences. Bogart called the Jaffe-Baker office one day and said, "I think you'd better get over here; she's stabbed me." The partners rushed up to the Horn Avenue house, and there found Mayo hysterically insisting she hadn't done anything, in spite of the evidence of a long slash through the back of Bogart's jacket, through which blood was seeping. The knife lay on the kitchen table. They called Dr. Stanley Immerman, who dressed the wound, which was fortunately superficial, and it was then that Bogart asked his agents to take out an insurance policy on his life, and make themselves the beneficiaries. They demurred, but he pointed out that they'd invested a great deal of time and money in his career, and stood to lose it all if Mayo's aim should ever improve.

"Look at that seltzer bottle, there," he said, indicating a siphon bottle in the corner. "She threw it at my head and missed, but someday she might not miss, and I think you ought to have insurance. This is a thing where you never know what she's going to do."

So they took out a hundred-thousand-dollar policy on his life, and it remained in effect until long after he and Mayo were divorced. Then one day he came into the office, looking tan and fit after a weekend on his boat, and Jaffe said, "My God, you're going to outlive us all," and canceled the policy.

It could not in fairness be said that Mayo was



the cause of his drinking, but during the time he was married to her he drank more than ever before or after—either to keep up with her, or because of the generally disorganized condition of the household.

The marriage had been chaos from the start. Reports of the wedding are full of conflict, but most accounts agree that it took place on August 21, 1938, that Judge Ben Lindsay performed the ceremony, and that it was held at the home of the Mel Bakers in Bel Air. There was a terraced lawn sloping away from the badminton court, where the tables were set up, and Mrs. Walter Abel is generally conceded to have been playing a harp in the shrubbery at the top of the terrace, but beyond that the survivors' accounts differ. Allen Rivkin, a writer who was present, recalls that the ceremony was held at noon; people began to arrive about ten, he says, and by noon the whole party was smashed. Mary Baker, at whose house it was held, swears that it was a dinner party, with the ceremony taking place in the late afternoon. At least two people remember seeing Mischa Auer crawling naked beneath the tables, but others tend to doubt it on the theory that a thing like that wouldn't go unnoticed by the general assemblage. Those who claim to have seen it, however, are quite vivid in their recollections. It is generally accepted that at one point or another Bogie cried, because he always cried at weddings. ("He cried at every one of his own weddings," Lauren Bacall said much later, adding, "And with good reason.")

Humphrey Bogart was married four times, each time to an actress: Helen Menken, Mary Phillips, Mayo Methot, and finally, Lauren Bacall.

A man who has been married four times, twice more or less against his wishes, is either too much of a gentleman—or too much of a coward—to say No, or is ambitious and hopes the marriages will advance his career, or is a satyr who can't be satisfied with one woman, or is forever looking for Mom. Those are a few of the more obvious reasons, and while some might be said to fit Bogart's case, there isn't one that covers the whole business completely.

He was, for instance, a gentleman at heart. He inherited this from his father, of whom he was extremely fond and who, ineffectual or not, was a gentle man in every sense of the word, and if Bogie seemed at times to be trying his best to conceal this inheritance, it was nevertheless there, and it showed up most often when least expected. It could be argued that once he had gone to certain lengths with a woman, he considered it ungentlemanly to back out, but that is a thin argument which wouldn't stand up against much buffeting. Turning it around and saying he was too much of a coward to back out would be a much thinner case, although there were some who chose to find cowardice in much that he did.

As for the ambition theory, a case could certainly be made for that in his first marriage, when Bill Brady, the theatrical producer, told him he'd never get another part if he didn't marry Helen Menken, and when subsequently he discussed with the theater agent, Lyman Brown, the question of whether the divorce would hurt his career; but there isn't a shred of evidence to show that any of his other marriages were based on ambition. He had known and liked Mary Phillips for a long time, and if, in fact, it was she who provided most of the support, it was not that he wasn't also working, and gaining a reputation on his own. As far as Mayo was concerned, there was nothing she could do to advance his career.

The satyr theory is wholly inapplicable here. Sex was low on his list of hobbies. Only once could

anyone recall his even looking at a female other than his wife, and that was done purely as a needle. It didn't even come in the category of a pass; it was a brief flurry of attention, and it would have gone unnoticed if it hadn't been so out of character. It succeeded in its intention of irritating his spouse, and that was that. Oddly enough, he couldn't even *act* like a satyr; in a film called *Battle Circus,* in 1953, he was supposed to be a Medical Corps major in hot pursuit of June Allyson (yes, June Allyson), and the lines he was forced to read turned to sawdust in his mouth. It can seldom be said that he gave an unconvincing performance, but nobody who had ever seen Bogart before would have been convinced by the leering gropes he made in Miss Allyson's direction. Try to imagine the Lord Olivier impersonating Shirley Temple, and you will have a rough idea of the incongruity.

As for the looking-for-Mom theory, there is no doubt that he was brought up by a strong mother, and his first marriage could have been considered a continuation of the pattern. But that marriage lasted approximately a year, and his wives thereafter were about his own age or, as in the case of the last one, twenty-five years younger. Mary Phillips was strong, an anchor to windward, but she was in no way domineering, and if anyone had the upper hand in their relationship, it was he, who did and said precisely as he chose. And while Mayo was many things, she was by no stretch of the imagination a mother figure, unless you picture your mother wearing boxing gloves. If Bogie was looking for Mom, he was—to mix the metaphor—barking up the wrong tree on that one.

So what is the answer? The simplest and most obvious is that he was never really in love on any of the first three occasions. He was certainly not in love with Helen; he may have been close to it with Mary, but it didn't survive the pull of their separate careers; and while he might have been fascinated by Mayo, there is nothing to show that he was ever what could be called deeply in love. That didn't happen until the fourth time around, and when it did happen, that was it.

In 1945, Warners decided to take Ernest Hemingway's novel *To Have and Have Not* and see if they could make it into another *Casablanca.* Howard Hawks was the producer-director, the screenplay was by Jules Furthman and William Faulkner, and Bogart, naturally, was the star. Instead of Ingrid Bergman they had Lauren Bacall (born Betty Perske), and instead of Dooley Wilson at the piano they had Hoagy Carmichael, and the story concerned Bogart's conversion from strict neutrality to being an active abettor of the Free French. The first words he spoke to his leading lady were "I saw your test," and then he delivered himself of one of the thundering understatements of the century: "We'll have a lot of fun together."

Hawks later said it was lucky for the picture they fell in love, because the electric current that crackled between them made it considerably easier on the director. At that point Betty's acting skills were more latent than evident, but her feeling for Bogie—and his for her—needed no assists from behind the camera. She was twenty years old but she looked ageless; she was the eternal temptress, with the sideways glance and the silken, throaty voice. Her first line on screen—"Does anyone here have a match?"—set the tone for the performance, and when she sang "How Little We Know," it was clear that a new personality had arrived. She joined the ranks of the "The" actresses, for whom the press agents turned common nouns into proper ones: Clara Bow, the "It" girl; Ann Sheridan, the "Oomph" girl; Marie MacDonald, "The Body"; and now Lauren Bacall, "The Look." Mercifully, her talent overcame her epithet, which was soon forgotten.

The picture when completed bore little or no relation to Hemingway's book, but that was of secondary importance to its romantic interest. Betty's most quoted line came as she undulated out of Bogart's hotel room; she gave him the sideways look over her shoulder, and said, "If you want me, just whistle. You know how to whistle, don't you, Steve? You just put your lips together, and—blow." That line became another "Play it, Sam," except for some reason people were able to remember it correctly. Its importance to the two characters involved can be gauged from the fact that he gave her a small gold whistle as a memento.

Mayo had fought off all the phantom competition like a tigress; now that the real thing had arrived, it was almost as if she sensed the futility of trying to fight any longer. She didn't give up immediately—far from it—and she wasn't fooled when Sam Jaffe or Mary Baker told her Bogie was out with "the cast," but she was fighting a rearguard action and she knew it. On May 10, 1945, she and Bogie were divorced, and he and Betty were married eleven days later, on Louis Bromfield's Malabar Farm in Ohio. He was aware of the twenty-five-year difference in their ages, but if it caused him any hesitation it didn't show; it was as though he knew this was the marriage he'd been looking for all along.

Their age difference was emphasized by the fact that, early in their romance, he called her "Baby," a name that was picked up by the press and continued for some little while. Shortly after the marriage, Bogie ran into Ester Leeming, a friend from *Petrified Forest* days, as he was leaving "21," and he gave her his usual greeting: "Hiya, Pepita." (She had played Paula, the Mexican cook.)

"I hear you married Lauren Bacall," she said, stating the case mildly; the courtship and marriage

(continued on page 81)

had used up almost as much newsprint as the Spanish–American War.

"Yeah," he replied with a smile. "Baby's a real Joe."

What he meant was obvious, but the words taken out of context could have meant almost anything. It was a relief to everyone when the "Baby" nickname faded from public use and was replaced by her given name. Nowadays, anyone who calls her "Lauren" or "Baby" is in the market for a thick lip.

Sentiments

For a man who cried at weddings, Bogart went to considerable lengths to conceal the softer side of his nature. He was sentimental about presents, and he tended to break up at all sorts of things, but he would cover it with a smirk or a sneer if other people were present, and would do his best to appear unmoved. A casual passerby might get the impression that he never even looked at his children (a son, Steve, and a daughter, Leslie Howard), but Sammy Cahn, the songwriter, and their neighbor when Bogie and Betty moved to Holmby Hills, would occasionally see him through the foliage, playing with them on their swings and doing what he could to share their fun. It was a tricky business; with a half-century head start, he couldn't be really close, but he put out a hand whenever he could. Sometimes they mystified him, as was the case when the swimming pool was being filled by a hose, and Steve had shrieking hysterics at the thought that the pool might overflow and the hose keep on running and drown them all. It was an odd phobia, and Bogart was flabbergasted that a son of his could have had such a reaction. He stood back, as though Steve were juggling hand grenades, and let somebody else try to do the soothing.

Leslie, who wore bangs and Chinese smocks, and had immense, round eyes, was as beautiful and as silent as a porcelain figurine, and if she didn't share her brother's temperament, she did share his inheritance of their mother's features. In a contemplative mood, Bogart could take pride in the fact that for one who had started so late as a father, he had come out so spectacularly well.

He was good with children, but there were signs that they occasionally made him nervous. (As he remarked to screenwriter Peter Viertel: "It's easy to be good with *other* people's kids.") Back when he was married to Mary Phillips, she and he were godparents to John and Mary Halliday's son John, and once, when the youth was in town on vacation from prep school, Bogart offered to buy him a lunch. His mother was taking him to a matinee, so it had to be an early lunch, and she delivered him to Bogart in the lobby of "21" at twelve-thirty sharp. Before she could leave, Bogart came darting after her and said, "For God's sake, what do you talk to a thirteen-year-old boy about?"

"You're his godfather," she replied. "You're supposed to be in charge of his religious instruction."

Later, when she and her son were in a cab on the way to the theater, she asked what he and his godfather had talked about.

"Not much," John replied. "He said, 'Listen, kid, there are twelve Commandments,' and then he ordered a drink."

Betty was mildly amused when she heard the anecdote, but she pointed out that he knew every one of the Ten Commandments by heart, so it must have been either his or young John's nervousness that confused the count. Furthermore, she said, he made the Commandments his code, and while he seldom if ever set foot in a church, he was still a deeply religious man. He had his own code, and his own way of life, and there was nothing in the world that could change it.

Bogart was also protective, not only of his family, but of others who were either lonely or lost or out of luck, or for whom he felt responsible. He used the "Which way is Hollywood?" test for any departing guest who he felt might have trouble with the police, and if the guest couldn't point immediately toward Hollywood (which was the Beverly Hills police way of separating the drunk from the sober), Bogart insisted he be driven home by someone with either less alcohol in him or a better sense of direction. Generally speaking, a newcomer in Hollywood does not get invited to a party unless he is already at one; the spare-guest lists are made up of those who have proven themselves presentable in public, and the telephone is used only as a last resort, but Bogart was bound by no such ritual. If he knew someone who was recently arrived or alone, he would call with an informal invitation such as "A few people are coming by for drinks," or, "What are you doing for dinner?" or, more simply, "Get your ass over here," and that would be the invitation. (Another way in which it differed from the norm was that the host did the calling; the usual routine is to give the lucky invitee your unlisted phone number, with the exhortation to "drop around any time next week—but call before you come.") One time in London, Adolph Green, Betty Comden's collaborator, knew that the Bogarts were in town and, although he didn't know them very well, called their hotel to say hello. Bogart not only said hello, he invited Green to have dinner with them—a dinner at which the other two guests turned out to be Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier. He continued to check with Green thereafter, not only in London but also in Hollywood, to make sure he was being properly fed and cared for. He even, at one point, made the superlative hostly gesture of trying to arrange him a bit of bed life, but somebody changed the subject and the idea was forgotten. (This was just as well, because

the whole thing was most certainly a gag, and if it had been carried through he would have been shocked and upset. The Puritan in him was never very far beneath the surface.)

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1091–1153), in his *Sermo Primus,* first enunciated the truism: "Who loves me will love my dog also." Bogart wasn't too concerned about who loved him, but anyone who did anything against his dogs was courting a terrible retribution. At one point the Bogarts had two boxers, probably the most affectionate of animals but also inclined on occasion to give tongue, and in the course of time one of the neighbors complained to the police. (This man had been a member of a warmhearted comedy team, but his warmth apparently chilled a bit in retirement.) Bogart's rage was incandescent. "The son of a bitch doesn't like *dogs!*" he shouted. "What kind of monster is he? The barking of dogs is a *cheerful* sound—he ought to be *glad* he can hear them!" Then, totally by coincidence, when Bogart was in the hospital, this ex-comedian, who wanted to make some changes on his property, went among the others in the area with a petition (local ordinance said two thirds of the neighborhood must agree to any significant change). When Bogart returned from the hospital, he found that his friend Sammy Cahn had signed, and he was outraged. "Don't you remember that bastard hates dogs?" he said. "How could you sign anything for a goddamned dog-hater?" Cahn pointed out that *he* hadn't had any valid complaint, but Bogart wasn't mollified. Later that night he called Cahn, and said, "I just thought. Were there any witnesses when you signed that petition?"

"No," Cahn replied. "He was alone."

"Then it's not legal," Bogart said, and hung up.

To his wife, Cahn said, "You know something? I think Bogie's going to get well."

Betty says firmly that he was never intentionally cruel to anyone—that his targets were the pompous or the stuffy or the phony, and that doesn't constitute cruelty—and while there are people who might argue that point, she is one who should know. She says he learned a valuable lesson once when he was a young actor, in the office of David Belasco, who had in front of him a script that was little short of rancid. The author came in, and Belasco gave him a long spiel that involved such phrases as "some awfully good points," "a great deal to be said for it," "a little more work here and there," "touch up this scene a bit," and so on, and when the writer had left, Bogart asked why all the soft soap—why hadn't he come right out and said the script stank?

"When you see a person who's done his best and it's no good," Belasco replied, "then you can't be cruel. If you know he can do better, then you say it stinks and he should get with it, but when you know this is the best he can do, just be gentle."

If Bogart dissembled about his sentimentality, he made no attempt to hide his feelings about honesty and integrity. When he and Betty were married, he told her they must always be honest with each other; and he said that if she ever found someone she preferred she should tell him, and if he thought the man would be good for her he'd step aside and let her go. At one point she became fascinated by Leonard Bernstein, and while Bogart was aware of it, he neither said nor did anything; it wasn't in his makeup to play the jealous or suspicious husband. When Betty told him Bernstein was coming out to California and would be there for the weekend, he said, "I can't stand all that piano playing—sitting around on the floor—I'm going off on the boat." And he went, leaving her to listen to the piano.

And, lest there should be any misinterpretation of the above, we will let her speak for herself: "Lenny Bernstein was never a threat to my marriage. He was only a part of my growing up and continued exposure to talented, exciting people. Bogie and Lenny were fond of each other and I want no inference that a romance might have been going on." Anyone who knew her knows she would never have dallied while married, but it's just as well the record be straight. To sum up on Bernstein, she says: ". . . there was excitement as there always is with music for me; it was someone so completely involved with his work—so active—that in California in particular it was like a strong wind."

The Puritan in Bogart was a force of major proportions. He disliked off-color jokes, and the odd fact is that despite the occasional gamy epithets that studded his talk, his language was generally of the drawing-room variety. He could turn the obscenities on or off like a faucet; they were not the crutch for him that they are for people with more limited vocabularies. He could become a finger-shaking moralist at a moment's notice, but at least once he was put in his place. When he was in Italy making *The Barefoot Contessa,* he ran across Ingrid Bergman, whose romance with Roberto Rossellini had scandalized the DAR and other self-righteous elements in this country, and he berated her for having thrown away her career in such a fashion.

"You were the top of the heap," he concluded. "You were a great star, and now look at you. What are you now?"

"A happy woman," she replied.

Concentration

A number of things changed for Bogart during the 1945–1946 period, a sort of clearing of the air and turning over a new leaf and flexing the muscles he'd been developing over the past decade or so. He had a new bride, one

who neither encouraged nor necessitated his drinking with both hands; he had a new boat, the fifty-four-foot yawl *Santana,* which replaced the in-more-ways-than-one obsolete *Sluggy;* and he had a new house, in Benedict Canyon, a step up from the battle-scarred Horn Avenue place. And, last but not least, he signed a contract with Warner Brothers that was, and still must remain, unique: it gave him one million dollars a year over a period of fifteen years, thereby guaranteeing him walking-around money until he was sixty-one and eligible for Social Security. Few actors have had such a platinum-studded future guaranteed them, but not many have worked so hard for it. He had, at the age of forty-six, been in eighteen plays and fifty-three pictures, a score that many an older actor would envy.

The house, at 2707 Benedict Canyon Road, was up a long driveway near the head of the canyon, hidden from public view and as rustic as one can get in Beverly Hills. It had a cozy, pub-type bar (he didn't give *up* drinking when he divorced Mayo; he just eased off a bit), and in short order it acquired a menagerie consisting of one large dog, fourteen chickens, and eight ducks. Anent the drinking: Tay Garnett, in his memoirs, tells of someone's asking Bogart if he'd ever been on the wagon, to which the reply was: "Just once—and it was the most miserable afternoon of my life." On another occasion, after a long lunch at "21," he announced he was going back to the hotel and take a nap, and when Betty said "Sissy," he looked at her coldly and replied, "You stay drink-for-drink with me someday, and see if *you* don't need a nap." He was by no means a teetotaler, but he had lost the insecurity and general aggravation of the Mayo period, and could drink for pleasure rather than escape.

The only cloud on his horizon was one that worried him a lot less than it did Jack Warner. For reasons of his own, he started taking hormone shots; the doctor warned him they might cause him to lose his hair, and they did. For him, the answer was simple: he bought a hairpiece that covered the damage until the hair grew back (and the first new growth came in with a sort of piebald effect); for Warner it was the hideous specter of his fifteen-million-dollar romantic property shedding his hair like a milkweed puff. But the rug did its job well, and Bogart's romantic allure was undiminished.

As an actor, he had not yet branched out into the disparate roles that marked the later part of his career (a phony priest, a gold prospector, a river rat, a psychotic Navy officer), but his technique was all there, waiting only the chance to prove itself. And his technique was, very simply, concentration. If that seems oversimplification, it is; it remains, however, the word he used for the *sine qua non.* In 1955, when he was doing a television version of *The Petrified Forest,* he asked Natalie Schafer what she thought was the most important element in acting, and when she said "vitality," he replied, "You're wrong—it's concentration." Miss Schafer says that his power of concentration was such that he was unaware of anything else that was going on around him. As for his performance, he was the same Duke Mantee who had chilled the audiences at the Broadhurst Theatre; after twenty years, he still had the part down cold. And that is an aspect of technique he didn't mention: being able to play the same role time after time with no loss in force or credibility. For a stage actor, this is essential; a screen actor can forget the whole scene the minute the director says "Print."

An actor's appraisal of himself is not necessarily reliable, because the combination of insecurity and ego that assails most sensitive performers can lead them into unsound conclusions; but most of his contemporaries feel that Bogart was intelligent enough, and self-analytical enough, not to be deluded about his acting. He and Spencer Tracy had great admiration for each other's work, often saying, in a joking way, "After me, he's the best," although one time Bogart said to Sam Jaffe, "Gary Cooper is not a great actor, but Tracy is. I'm not a great actor, but when we, Coop and I, come on screen, people focus attention on us." That, Jaffe believes, is what makes a star; that and great intelligence, which Bogart had. Jaffe once went on the set of *The Harder They Fall,* Bogart's last picture, where they were shooting a scene that involved Bogart and one of the more energetic of the Method actors. Between takes, Bogart whispered to Jaffe: "Watch this guy; he thinks he's going to steal the scene from me." They started a new take, and the Method actor screamed and punched and gave a good imitation of Westphalian ham, but when the rushes were shown, it was only Bogart that people were looking at. He had two rules for playing with Method actors: (1) Let them improvise to their hearts' content and just wait for your cue; and (2) Don't ever play an eating scene with them, because they spit all over you. Other than that, he found them harmless.

Beyond the above quote to Jaffe, it's hard to find evidence of what Bogart thought of himself or of acting, because, as producer Collier Young has pointed out, Bogart was the most un-actorish person he knew. He was two different people: a dedicated actor when at work, and when not at work he was one of a number of other people, and there was no shoptalk. Then there were subdivisions within those divisions; some actors who worked with him loved him, and some loathed him, and the same went for his nonacting periods. He went his way unconcerned, behaving precisely as he felt the occasion demanded.

One example of an actor who would die for him

is Billy Roy, who played the cabin boy in *Passage to Marseille.* There was a scene where Roy had to throw an orange, and James Wong Howe, the cameraman, complained he threw like a girl. Time and again he tried, and Curtiz, the director, kept shouting "Cut!" while the grips and the extras began to jeer and whistle and stamp. Finally Bogart stepped in, stopped the shooting, and took Roy off to a corner of the set and taught him how to throw. Shooting didn't resume until he had it perfected, and there wasn't a peep from the jeering gallery. Later in the picture, Roy was required to die in Bogart's arms, which was perfectly all right with him.

Then there is William Holden, whose opinion is that Bogart was "an actor of consummate skill, with an ego to match." The first picture in which they appeared together was *Invisible Stripes,* in 1939, when Holden was twenty-one, and there was a scene in which Holden had to drive a motorcycle while Bogart sat in the sidecar. Before the shooting started, Holden overheard Bogart say to Lloyd Bacon, the director, "I won't ride with that son of a bitch; he'll crack it up. Get my double to do it." As Holden points out, when you're twenty-one you take the words "son of a bitch" seriously (as you get older, you learn they can even be a term of affection), and furthermore he prided himself on his ability to handle a motorcycle. He did a simmering burn, and when Bogart's double got into the sidecar and the shooting started, Holden was so determined to give an exhibition of good driving that he zoomed off and piled the machine into a brick wall.

This set the tone for what might best be called a cool relationship, with Bogart taking no pains to hide his low opinion of Holden's ability. They weren't in another picture together until *Sabrina,* in 1954, in which there was a scene where Bogart was on camera while Holden read lines from the side, holding the script and, as it happened, smoking a cigarette. Bogart kept blowing his lines, and when, finally, Billy Wilder, the director, asked him what was wrong, he replied, "It's that fucking Holden back there, waving cigarettes around and throwing paper in the air." There was dead silence, and then Holden said to Wilder, "Shall I kill him now, or wait until later?" Frantically, Wilder worked to restore calm, and Holden said, "Look, Mr. Bogart, when you come to work on this set you're an actor; when I come I have to clean out the dressing rooms first." He decided against mayhem, because hitting a man twenty years his senior would have lost him the sympathy of everyone on the set. When shooting was over for the day, Bogart asked him to his dressing room for a drink, and after pouring two Scotches, said, "I guess I got a little upset out there," to which Holden replied, "Let's just drink our Scotch, and forget it."

For what it may be worth, Holden has a theory that if an actor can be impersonated, he's not an actor but a personality. It is mentioned here only because, in 1943, John Forsythe, then a fledgling actor, had worked out what was considered by all who saw it a clever impersonation of Bogart. On the set of *Destination Tokyo,* which was being made at Warners, Forsythe entertained some of his co-workers with the impersonation, and Cary Grant, the star of the picture, said, "Very good. Wait a minute and I'll get Bogart, and let him see it." He went over to where *Action in the North Atlantic* was being shot, while Forsythe tried to think of ways of vanishing from the face of the earth. In a few minutes Grant appeared with a faintly interested Bogart, and prodded Forsythe into repeating the impersonation. When it was over, Bogart sucked a tooth.

"One of us stinks," he said, and walked away.

At the bar

Humphrey Bogart died on January 14, 1957. He had a theory that "life is for the living"; he felt that any grieving or mourning was a disservice to the departed, and that the only thing to do was have a drink, and carry on from there. (He believed that no matter what happened, the world was always two drinks below normal.) He remembered how Mrs. Will Rogers, on being told of her husband's death in an airplane crash, had doubled over as though hit in the stomach, then slowly straightened up and gone on with what she'd been saying. That, he felt, was the way people should behave. That showed true class.

He achieved class through his integrity and his devotion to what he thought was right, and if there were those who either didn't agree or who saw it in another light, that was their business. He believed in being direct, simple, and honest, all on his own terms, and this ruffled some people and endeared him to others. He couldn't have cared less.

In the interest of simplicity, Betty kept the formal trappings to a minimum. On Thursday, January 17, a brief service was held in All Saints' Episcopal Church in Beverly Hills; a glass-enclosed model of *Santana* was where the coffin would normally be, and the Reverend Kermit Castellanos read the Ten Commandments and Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar." John Huston delivered a brief, eloquent eulogy; then Betty asked people back to the house for a drink. While this was going on, Bogart was being cremated at Forest Lawn, and the gold whistle from *To Have and Have Not* was with him. □