

THE ROUTINE

LOGLINE

A group of filmmakers confront a painful event during the making of a film.

HALF-PAGE SYNOPSIS

We begin on the set of Paolo's latest film. Here, a group of nine people are in the final days of shooting, but their conflicting natures of the cast and crew, and a dark secret, mar the shoot. Starring in the film are Alma, a young beautiful woman who is facing her pregnancy, and the little Danilo, who has recently lost his father. Behind the scenes stand Paolo, the director, who has a keen awareness of the psychology of his cast and crew, and Gerardo, the film's producer, who, despite being on crutches, still knows how to have a good time.

The final several scenes of the film bring the crew to a river with an old fishing boat and an abandoned bar that they have converted into a dressing room. As they continue to work at the shooting, secrets from the past begin to emerge about the film and the people making it. We soon learn that Paolo is making this film to help Gerardo come to terms with the death of his brother (Danilo's father), for whose death Gerardo is responsible. Old passions flare and the lines between actors and characters are blurred as Gerardo and Danilo are finally able to face their tragedy whereas Alma is finally ready to become a mother.

ONE-PAGE SYNOPSIS

A crew of nine people is shooting the last scene of a movie. The story begins in a film studio and moves over along the mouth of a river the next day to end up on a fishing boat into the sea.

During the making of the film we can see the alternation between the witty good nature of the director, who's constantly paying attention to the psychological influences of his film, and the strong personality of the producer, who seems to prefer fun, friendship and women to the solid professionalism of the crew - almost opposite to the rest of the team, hanging in the balance between individualism and fellowship.

This subtle, allusive vein is indeed one of the basis of this story whose subjects are, apart from this, the private events related to the members of the crew in a clever alternation of little big common experiences, symbols that seem to be beyond reality and different psychological moments helping us to draw the emblematic and stylized picture, in form of a comedy, of a team - held together by their efforts - working on their set, even if they cynically know they're not going to meet again after the end of the shots.

At the end of a long afternoon spent in an empty harbor, waiting for the sun, the crew is now together again to shoot the final scene, where a pregnant girl, who's fed up with her job, has fallen asleep because of the gaze of a mysterious sailor and she is now sailing in the open sea.

Once in the sea - after they have crossed a lagoon surrounded by a leaden and charming winter atmosphere - the movie in the movie ends up on the fish boat, where the young woman, as if she has awakened from a dream, is now more aware of herself: she thinks about her past, her baby and she finds herself to be more adult.

THREE-PAGE SYNOPSIS

"La routine" has for its subject the last two days of production of a film. The story begins in a film studio, moves over along the mouth of a river the next day to end up into the sea, on a fishing boat.

The plot is arranged on two mirror levels (the crew plays behind the scenes, while the set becomes reality) and the story is meant to underline the crew's different personalities, nine characters whose private affairs will be absorbed in from time to time from job on the set.

The first scene takes place in a studio and the scenery reminds of a marine environment: the hold of a fish boat, a pair of cabins and a small tattoo room. They're shooting scenes in which ALMA has been hypnotized under the gaze of a mysterious sailor, who finally kidnaps her and takes her to the sea, on a fishing boat.

Alma plays the role of a girl who's troubled by her desire to run away, but the actress is actually a cheerful and somehow cynical person, the real opposite of her character, and perhaps she's the simplest figure of the whole crew. She's the one who loves to have fun between a shot and another; she establishes fellowship with SILVANO, the local actor and RUDY, the photography director. She joins the amusements of the producer, GERARDO and finally pushes ROSANNA, the organizer, to woo Silvano, who's a romantic and loyal man beneath his tough exterior, as well as playing the role of a dour sailor.

Among this group we have SERGIO, going around, who appears and disappears, a picturesque old designer, who has arrived at the end of his career. Sergio loves to spend time telling stories about his exotic travels and he sometimes spends a few moments with the director, PAOLO, a polite and kind 100 kg big boy. During one of these moments, Sergio describes Paolo one of his dreams. It's about a man on the beach, a young captain, who's first alive and then dies.

The director is perfectly aware of the implications of his profession and he soon realizes that the man of the dream has something to do with his film; during the shots he has a kind behavior towards the crew, but he has a different attitude towards little DANILO. He calls him on the set to give him a small part in the film, then he makes him believe, through a subtle joke, that every object he will touch will wither. This is a spell which is actually meant to gradually destroy all his fears.

Danilo has in fact recently lost his father, who was a captain and now he's just a child who has been suddenly tear out of his little Eden. We will later understand that his father was the same captain of the dream Sergio was talking about with Paolo.

Gerardo, as well, is a pleasure-loving sixty years old man who's having a big crisis: Danilo's father was his brother. But Gerardo is also the producer of the film and his crisis, due to the fact that his brother's death corresponds to the end of his best years, gets worse when he invites the crew to have fun instead of taking care of their professional duties, with the typical nonchalance of an experienced and strong man. Rosanna will help him to change his mind on Paolo's demand and she will have to convince Gerardo to accept the role of the captain.

The next morning the crew - whose film has been stopped to the moment when Alma was kidnapped and taken to the fish boat - moves to the mouth of the river to take the outdoor shots into the sea. The first part of the shoot ends happily with a toast, organized by Gerardo, the producer. Then, however, both the influence of alcohol, both his mood swings, immediately change the atmosphere of the party: TIBERIO, one of the technicians, realizes the profound loneliness we can always feel on the set; Paolo feels again the desire for a trip away with Sergio; Rudy works uninterruptedly just not to get drunk anymore, and Danilo, who has lost his father, constantly feels the grasp of death. The only ones who are still able to preserve their identity are Alma, Silvano and, apparently, Rosanna.

Rosanna has been knowing Gerardo for years and she is the only one into the crew to be able to dig into his drama; perhaps a past of love still binds her to him. She knows that his pain hides the truth and that the loss of his brother has been an accident caused by Gerardo himself. After a terrible bender - and especially during an improvised but relaxed dance between Silvano and Rosanna - Gerardo finds the strength to play the role of the captain of the ship and goes to the fish boat that once belonged to his brother.

The man declares himself the captain and he takes possession of the helm. But he did not come to terms with Silvano, who is now the real captain of the boat, and unhesitatingly turns him away of there by force, leaving us uncertain about the plan (reality-fictional) we have to place this scene in for a moment. In fact, the collision between Silvano and Gerardo was provided by Paolo's script and this will be the only time when a real personal drama will be offered to the director for the

good cause of the film.

Their work, then, prevails on moods, whims and troubles everyone is taking. The director gives again the clearest example: the child has first had a disproportionate reaction to his spell (uprooting a tree with his bare hands, then trying to bless himself with holy water), but then Paolo's intentions will be clear when Danilo receives a special costume as a gift, which - according to Paolo's promise - will allow him to fly.

Flying has always been Danilo's desire and Paolo is the only one who can fulfill it. In order for this to happen, Danilo will have to join his hands to Paolo's. And even if behind Danilo's flight there's actually a simple and effective magic trick, the child finds his inner life again holding Paolo's hands, a world his father's death had disrupted.

In return, Paolo will have the young actor's sincere performance during the last scene, thanks to his new awareness of the world.

Meanwhile Alma, the main character of the "film into the film", wakes up from her long sleep on a fishing boat into the sea. This is the last scene and Silvano, who has definitely become the captain, is driving the boat. Alma, who's escaping from everyone, has been kidnapped in order to let her meet her little brother Danilo again; now that she has come back, the child tells her of Silvano's spell: the captain has taken his hands and asked him to put them on Alma's asleep body. It is now that Danilo, so happy to have his sister back again, has two strong sensations. The first was about their father, who was protecting them, and the other about his sister's pregnancy.

We have arrived to the last moments of this work: Paolo's film, telling the story of a young woman and her brother who meet again, is now over. Soon it's time to say goodbye: Silvano and Gerardo drink the last cup together; Tiberio puts the equipment into the truck, alone. Rudy seeks some kind of comfort in heavy drinking, while Paul and Alma are joking, laughing and making silly comments. The atmosphere is so different now. The end of the shots may suggest a moralistic conclusion because of the cynical attitude of the crew, even if this doesn't contradict the vital energy of the whole story: the pleasure of being together, to forget personal affairs and give space to work, irony and dreams.