



TCM Classic Film Review: To Have and Have Not (Hawks, 1944): USA

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

While the rest of the TCM Classic Film Festival was down Hollywood Boulevard at the historic Chinese Theatre for the [Opening Night Gala](#) or at the Chinese Mann Theatres, a demographically, well-represented audience experienced an extraordinary film emanated from a bet between legendary Hollywood director, Howard Hawks and one of my favorite literary heroes, Ernest Hemingway, a Nobel laureate. Prior to the screening, the audience was treated to a talk by film historian and film producer, Michael E. Uslan.

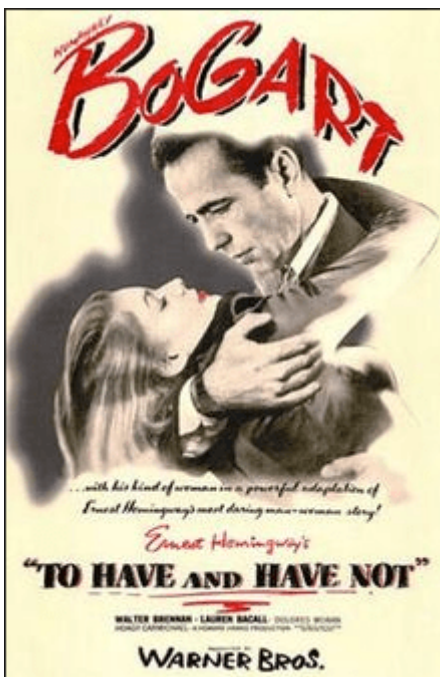
Uslan provided the audience with tidbits of information to stimulate and whet the audience appetite for the main course. For instance, the film's female lead, Lauren Bacall was nineteen years old and Humphrey Bogart, the film's male lead was forty-five years old during the film's production. A year later Bogart divorced his wife and married Bacall. They remained a couple until Bogart's death in 1957.

Legend has Hawks gushing over Hemingway one night singing the writer's praises until finally proclaiming he could make a good movie from Hemingway's worst novel. Hemingway hemmed and hawed until finally giving Hawks *To Have and Have Not*. William Faulkner, a Nobel prize winning author himself, collaborated with Jules Furthman and is given/took credit for the screen adaptation of Hemingway's novel. The film originally passed from Howard Hughes to Warner Bros where Hawks was able to bring the work to fruition.

The film follows the tried and true plot of *Casablanca* as the Vichy Government is harassing the populace while the Resistance is smuggling co-conspirators out of the country. The film is set in Martinique. The film's opening mimics *Casablanca* with a somber non-diegetic beat and a map overlay the camera pushes in on to reveal the film's setting. In juxtaposition, to the sobering non-diegetic pieces, Kansas City jazzman, Hoagy Carmichael leads an array of diegetic, upbeat, fun-spirited tunes on his piano. The costuming and production design are similar to *Casablanca* (excellent) while the lighting adds a bit more mystery with its use of shadows than *Casablanca* does.

Best by far, in my opinion, is the acting. Bogart and Bacall have an unspoken sexual tension that permates most, if not all of their scenes. The supporting cast of Walter Brennan, Delores Moran, Hoagy Carmichael, Sheldon Leonard and Marcel Dalio delivers with their spoken lines and physicalities that kept the audience rollicking when not mesmerized by Bogie and Bacall. Director of Photography Sid Hickox provided some nicely crafted frames, highlighting Bacall's luminescent skin tone. Perc Westmore was credited with the film's make-up.

One of the film's lines is listed as a top 40 greatest film lines of all time by the American Film Institute. The sequence begins with Bacall delivering her line to Bogart's character Steve, in the form of a rhetorical question. "You know how to Whistle don't you Steve?" The second half brought the house down with claps and cheers.



[To Have and Have Not](#), viewed during the 2018 TCM Classic Film Festival at the historic Egyptian Theatre, is an exceptional film embodying this year's TCM Classic Film Festival thematic logline: "Writing focuses visions, reflects our feelings and inspires great performances on both sides of the camera." • Highly recommended!

Category

1. TCM Classic Film Festival

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