

A DIALOGUE IN THE NIGHT

feature film - operational screenplay

*

Mario Roccato
2021

SHORT SYNOPSIS

The film begins with the scene of the presumed will of the protagonist to take his own life.
Everything takes place over a single, long night: in this, the night is a metaphor of despair,
that will only partially dissolve with the rising of dawn.

The film is starred, in presence, almost everything by the protagonist (Lucrezia),
on the premises of his residence.

Lucrezia is an actress who won a very important film award,
which should be delivered to you the next day but which you, however, do not want to withdraw.

During the night Lucrezia receives a series of phone calls to which she would not like to answer;
however, some people who will be central
for the development of the plot:

a young journalist, a distracted and self-centered friend, the cynical producer,
the self-centering director, a lost love,
and not least the award-winning film's lighting engineer.

During this long night Lucrezia will have the opportunity to manifest
all its intimate resignation and despair,
in the face of a reality that seems to have lost all authentic meaning for her.

Final and cathartic meeting with the light technician,
who visits her in the early hours of dawn.

STYLISTIC NOTES

- a) There will be no "shoulder" shots, because it is my belief that they are only welcome in action films; the camera should not therefore make you feel your presence, but must be like an indiscreet eye that looks at events. The action is mostly reserved for the actors' acting. With the choice of fixed shots the attention of the viewer will not be induced to distract themselves from the contents of the acting.
- b) The film will be shot with two cameras positioned so as to allow the actress protagonist to almost never interrupt the flow of their own acting (choice used successfully in my film "Write a Love"). This technique will allow you to make changes to the frame chosen only during assembly. In this I repeat the search for the perception of a total "absence" of the cameras.
- c) The timing of the scenes will have to follow the development of the emotions of both the protagonist and the voices with which he is talking, so the pauses will depend on the sensitivity of the actors.
- d) Each telephone interview will be recorded live: the external voices of the interlocutors will have to be heard by the protagonist in their own phone (and vice versa), in a real telephone conversation; simultaneously, the external voices of the phone will be recorded live in a separate room.
- e) The lights are those of a stem lamp with warm light, and an additional side light, designed to draw, first of all, the face of the protagonist.
- f) Rare pieces of music will be inserted during the editing phase.

nota: quando nella sceneggiatura viene indicato «stacco al nero» significa che l'immagine viene tranciata su fondo nero, della durata variabile di 2-4 secondi

THE CHARACTERS

Lucrezia	Actress in existential crisis
Barbara	Novice journalist
Silvia	Friend of Lucrezia
Man	Lost love of Lucrezia
Producer	of the award-winning film
Director	of the award-winning film
Giuseppe	technical of the lights
Man	who rapes
Friends	for an evening

SCENE OF PROLOGUE

no actors
twilight in May

PICTURES

The camera wanders around the house, like an indiscreet eye, lingering on the images of some objects including:

- 2 table frames with photographs of grandparents and a man (ex-lover)
- 1 wall clock
- 1 window open at night
- abandoned undergarments for the room
- 1 mobile phone on the living room table
- 1 second telephone on the ground
- 1 wall mirror
- 1 open script on the living room table
- 1 kitchen table with dinner remnants and a writing pad with pen
- two large photos of Lucrezia, theater style
- a large hanging photo, of friend Silvia, treated watercolor style
- A large bouquet of flowers still incellophanati
- an open bottle of whisky
- a series of books on a shelf
- a modern floor lamp, diffused light and yellow

VOICES

VOICE-OVER

«The room is modern, and would be well tidy if it were not for the abandoned underwear around. It's going down in the evening. It's a May evening. From the window enters a distant noise, a traffic and things, but especially that air scented, and light that only the month knows how to give, undecided of a summer that, still, cannot be born, when he cancels things in an insistent light.

Lucrezia.

Thirty years.

Actress.

Beautiful.

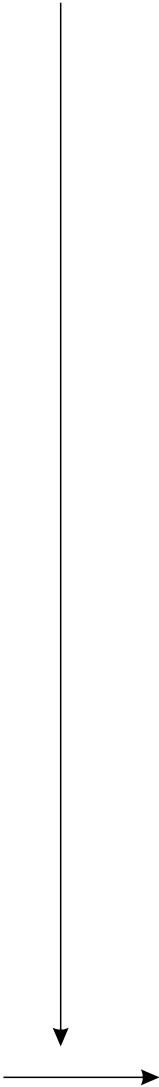
But life seems to have painted a thin layer on her face, a mask that is not an actor because it floats beside her, and so, even when she laughs there is no joy that can then explode, a joy that, that transparent veil, knows how to pierce.

Only a few have been able to go beyond its luminous beauty - and they have done so not without a deliberate disenchantment - and have finally been able to scroll on her face the design of an evident soul, of something that really, among things, exists with force".

MUSIC

Main Theme

>>>>>cross fading<<<<
-----continues on scene one, with the camera entering the bathroom



SCENE 1

Lucrezia
8:30 P.M.

at the beginning of each scene, where indicated, appears,
at the bottom right, the corresponding time sign,
which serves as the title of the scene

PICTURES

Lucrezia appears in the camera as she enters the bathtub. On a shelf she places a container of pills.

Look into the void.
He empties a handful of pills in his hand and closes his eyes.
At last he makes the gesture of swallowing them; but he spits them out and does not swallow them.

He lays the pills on the shelf of the bath.

He opens his eyes again looking into the void.

She brings water on her face, and her makeup drips.

The phone rings in the other room. She doesn't move.

After a few seconds the phone rings again, and she still does not move.

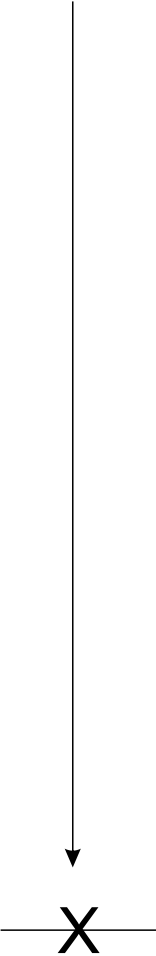
The wall clock in the other room beats half an hour.

VOICES

MUSIC

...the Main Theme continues, and ends abruptly on the final black break

[[[the image detaches to black]]]]



SCENE 2

Lucrezia
21:00 P.M.

PICTURES

Lucrezia comes out of the bathroom.
Her hair's running water.
He's wearing a bathrobe.
Makeup's still dripping down her face.
She stops, disoriented, like lost. She walks carelessly around things.
She touches something with her hands.
It stops in front of its framed portrait on the wall.
His is a true and absent despair.

The clock strikes nine strokes, and Lucrezia goes to touch it,
listening to its sound.

Lucrezia now, seen from behind with the clock at the bottom, cries
loudly.



metaphor of time

anguish

[[[the image detaches to black]]]]

SCENE 3

Lucrezia - Barbara
21:50 P.M.

PICTURES

You see the clock that marks 9.50, then detail of the phone on the sofa of the living room, next to Lucrezia, and now it starts to play.

Lucrezia is undecided, but then answers...

She throws the phone on the couch. She's agitated, almost hysterical.
She pours herself a glass of whisky. She swallows it.
He grabs a pillow and throws it down violently.
The scene ends on the pillow on the floor.

VOICES

"Hello!" (almost screams)

Woman's voice (a bit intimidated, uncertain): - Hello... Sorry to bother you. I'm Barbara, calling from New Cinema International Magazine, United States.
- (rude) Yes, you disturb me!
- I'm sorry... I didn't mean...
- Ah... you call me from New York, and you speak Italian?
- Yes, here I am the correspondent from Italy... I am calling from here... from Rome.
- All right! What do you want?
- (uncertain) I'd like to talk to you a bit... about your new award...
- I don't want to. I really don't want to!
- But... it is a very important prize...! that all actresses would like to receive...
- Sure. But I don't care.
- You don't care... the award ... or my interview?
- Both of them!
- So, then...
- ... and then, if you want, call my agent!
- I'm sorry... but I did... and he gave me your number...
(pause)
- Ah! Sure! And who gave him permission?
- Do not...
- All right! Listen: call me as much as you want, if you find me again...! (hang up)

[[[the image detaches to black]]]]

SCENE 4

Lucrezia - Man(ex-lover)
22:00 P.M.

PICTURES

The camera goes up from Lucrezia’s feet, standing in front of the open window. Now the bathrobe has opened, and in the profile we see part of his naked body.
She raises her hands, outstretched arms, like she wants to grab the air, outside.
The camera sharply detach on PP shaken, while the cell phone still rings.
She looks at the number and has a little grimace. Even by surprise.
It is undecided whether to answer, then it answers, weak:

VOICES

- Hello!
Voice of man (he is that of the photograph in the frame on the shelf, seen in the prologue): - It’s me...
- Hello
- How are you? (long silence) Are you still there...?
- I’m all right.
- I call you for your award...
(silence) - Yes.
- Are you busy?
- No.
- Is something wrong?
- No.
- Aren’t you happy? (wait) About your prize?
- I don’t know.
(silence)
- Well... maybe I shouldn’t have...
- Shouldn’t you have what? Left me on the street two years ago?
(silence)
- No... I don’t know...
- Exactly! What do you want now?
(silence)
- Nothing.
(silence)
- So hello! (hangs up)

She stands still, looking at the phone in her hand. Her face is empty.

[[[the image detaches to black]]]]

SCENE 5

Lucrezia

PICTURES

Detail of the pills on the bathroom shelf.
Detail of the last water entering the drain (noise).
Detail of a hand pressing on the pubis, violent.
PPP plan of Lucrezia, who looks in the mirror of the sink.
She presses two fingers on their eyes.

Then she takes the hair dryer and begins to dry them with anger.

VOICES

MUSIC

very short chords

[[[the image detaches to black]]]]

SCENE 6

Lucrezia
23:00 P.M.

PICTURES

We see Lucrezia at the window, on her back. She wears a long sweater on her tights. There’s some noise from the street. Now we see her from outside the window, in a long plan. She’s looking into the still void.

We go back to her from behind: she turns and moves towards the target, impaling him.

VOICES

MUSIC

short track,
muted, suspended

-----...continue on scene 7—————➔

SCENE 7

Lucrezia - Barbara

PICTURES

Lucrezia enters the kitchen. She is looking at the few remnants of a frugal dinner.
She seems to start tidying up, but immediately takes the plate and hurls it in the sink.

The phone indicates an audio message received. She open it and we hear the voice of the journalist speaking.

Lucrezia smiles a bit when she hears the word "rookie". She thinks, and then retrieves the journalist's number and calls her.

VOICES

- I'm still Barbara. I must first apologize, I realized that maybe I was really bothering you. I don't know what to do... You know? Actually, I'm a rookie in my line of work, and... and they gave me this responsibility... to talk to you, I mean. Excuse me again and... only if you want, call me back. Maybe, just for a chat , where my interview has nothing to do... (pause) Good night, so...

Journalist: - Hello? Lucrezia?
- Yes. I was really rude. Before.
- Oh don't worry... (pause) Do you know that, in the meantime, I called your director?
- (sarcastic) Oh yes? And what did he say?
- (laughs a bit') Well... he told me about his work, about how good he was... But you... forgive me if I tell him, not a word!
- I didn't doubt it!
- Do you want to talk?
- No. I don't know. Maybe.
- (long break) ... So, in the end, you think it normal, someone like your director?
- Very normal! Unfortunately...
- And yet... if it weren't for his big prize...
- Exactly! (silence) Listen, I called you back to apologize. It was not right to leave you as I did. But now, if you'll excuse me, I close.
- Oh of course... I understand that...
- Figure out what??
- That you does not want to be disturbed. So the...
- No. Wait. (long break) Maybe it will do me good to talk to someone...
- (pause, shy) If you like, I'll stay here. I'd like to have a chat with you..
(silence)
- Not everyone is like that. In the cinema, I mean. (pause)
- Is there a hunt for fame?
- They all go looking for something to say... about themselves... Every opportunity is good to be able to say "I was there! I was there! I was there! You want to kick their asses and shout, "We know you were there! We saw you!"
- (thinks) I think I understand... actually, although I've only recently been doing this job, I've found very few people who know...
- ... that they are able to recognize when the merit, the real one, the irreplaceable one, is someone else's...
(Silence. She's going to cry)
- Are you crying, Lucrezia? (no answer) (pause) Can I... can I do something for you, Lucrezia?
(silence, then): - Listen, why don't you come here to me? The night is still long. At least for me...
- Of course! I didn't dare...
- You dare, you dare, in life! At worst, you will receive a lot of rejection, be sure!.....

MUSIC

scena 7 continua

- Do you know where I live?
- Sure. Here in the office they told me everything... it's here next to me.
- It's obvious... The cows at the market...!
- How did you say...? I didn't understand...
- Nothing. Nothing. See you then! (and hang up)

[[[the image detaches to black]]]]

...continue.....

