

06 Pickford, Fairbanks (Chaplin)

SCENE FIVE - UNITED ARTISTS' STUDIOS - SEPTEMBER 1934

Lights up a movie set. A couple lights. A camera. We are on the set of MODERN TIMES - or, at least, a version of it. DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS and MARY PICKFORD sit in producer's chairs labeled FAIRBANKS and PICKFORD, backs to the audience (we might not ever even see their faces) watching him intently. The pressure is on.

CHAPLIN

So, basically he is just caught up in the misery of the modern workplace. The assembly lines, the dangerous machines, the mind-numbing humdrum of industrial life.

PICKFORD

Sounds interesting! This is an excellent idea for your first talkie. Have you written the dialogue?

CHAPLIN

(Nods his head no)

FAIRBANKS

Oh, so you're just playing the Tramp? Again?

CHAPLIN

(Nods again)

FAIRBANKS

No offense, Charlie, but don't you think it's time to move on?

CHAPLIN

(Shakes his head "Not yet", nervously)

PICKFORD

We've talked about this, Charlie. The transition to talkies is really hard. Trust me, I understand. There's a reason I don't act anymore.

FAIRBANKS

You know that United Artists would never leave you behind, but-

CHAPLIN

Look, if you just give me a chance
to show you what I've done then
maybe you will agree-

PICKFORD

You know what? Sure. Let's see
what you've got.

CHAPLIN briefly exits and returns in full Tramp mode. He
approaches an old-fashioned time card machine and pulls
down the lever. It's Modern Times in front of our very
eyes.

FAIRBANKS

Okay, hold, Charlie. This is all
fine and dandy. But we-

CHAPLIN's passion comes blazing through.

CHAPLIN

No, no, see this is actually
what's happening right NOW. Here
in America. There are so many
people out of work and those that
are working are being run into the
ground.

PICKFORD

There's certainly validity to
that.

FAIRBANKS

Of course there is. But we need a
hit Charlie and this isn't going
to cut it anymore.

PICKFORD

Douglas!

FAIRBANKS

I'm not trying to be mean, Mary.

CHAPLIN

These people ARE voiceless. No one
listens to them. No one lets them
speak. I want to tell this story
about real people and the brutal
conditions they are facing-

PICKFORD

Charlie, we want you to do that,
too. But we need you to do it
with words. Just try, won't you?

CHAPLIN
...sure, Mary.

FAIRBANKS
Love the passion, Charlie. Really,
I do. You'll be at the party
tonight, yes?

CHAPLIN
You know me. I'd never miss a
Pickfair soiree.

They smile and wander off, commenting to each other as they
exit.

FAIRBANKS
For a man who usually won't shut
the hell up, he sure is afraid of
a little dialogue.

PICKFORD
Oh, Mr. Fairbanks!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]