

The Pat Hobby Stories Study Guide

The Pat Hobby Stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald

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Pat Hobby's Christmas Wish

Pat Hobby's Christmas Wish Summary

It is late Christmas Eve and Pat Hobby is at the studio, working for less than half what he had made in his heyday. Pat is chatting with a guy from the scenario department, waxing nostalgic about the old days. Then Pat returns to his office where the secretary he had been waiting for has finally arrived. The girl is crying. Pat assumes she is upset about having to work Christmas Eve but learns that she is upset because she was once the secretary to Harry Gooddorf, one of the studio executives, but he had moved her to the secretary pool. Pat learns that the secretary, Helen, has information that could be damaging to Gooddorf. Pat asks the secretary to dinner.

Over dinner, Pat gets Helen to tell him about her information. Helen once hand delivered a letter to another executive that implied the two men had killed an actor. Pat decides to use this information to secure himself a better position with the studio. Pat goes to Gooddorf and tells him he has evidence against him in writing and tells him that he wants to be made a producer to keep it from the cops. Gooddorf agrees to meet Pat in a bar to further discuss the situation. However, when Pat shows Gooddorf the copy of the letter that Helen made, he refuses to bend to Pat's demands. Helen, it turns out, was Gooddorf's lover and is willing to tear up the letter, but Gooddorf does not need her to. The letter is not proof of guilt, only proof that Gooddorf felt bad for not saving the actor from his own self destruction.

Pat Hobby's Christmas Wish Analysis

This first story introduces the character of Pat Hobby. Pat is a writer who was once a star, but has not been successful in his career as a writer since silent movies became talkies. Pat is clearly not happy with this change, talking with a fellow studio employee about how great things were when he would get the top gifts around the holidays, but now he had to work Christmas. When Pat learns of a secret that might help him get a better paying job, he jumps at it, showing that he is willing to do just about anything to get what he wanted. This first story also hints that Pat Hobby is an alcoholic, touching on the theme of alcoholism, when one of the characters makes an off color comment about Pat visiting the bar across from the studio. This does not surprise the reader since Pat appears to be the kind of person who would be susceptible to this type of behavior.

A Man in the Way

A Man in the Way Summary

Pat Hobby slips onto the studio and tries to convince executive Jack Berners to hire him. Berners tells Pat to come up with an original idea and he would consider it. Pat goes to the writer's building looking for an empty office to rest in. Instead, Pat finds a young woman who is a new writer at the studio. The young woman tells Pat about a magazine article on artifacts being shipped to Europe to be put on display in a museum and how she wants to use it in a movie. After his nap, Pat goes to Berners' office and suggests a scene that is exactly like the one the lady writer told him. Berners agrees to hire Pat in order to allow him to expand the idea. Later that afternoon, after Pat is on salary, the lady writer tells Berners her idea.

A Man in the Way Analysis

Pat Hobby again shows his darker side when he steals a female writer's idea in order to get himself hired on at the studio. Pat is told to come up with an original idea, but instead he pitches an idea that a female writer told him. Pat gets what he wants, but the female writer is a friend of Berners and sets Berners straight at the end of the story. The reader can imagine how upset Berners would be, seeing Pat's true colors after he has already agreed to hire him on. This story sets a tone for the rest of the stories, showing the depth of Pat's unluckiness.



Boil Some Water—Lots of It

Boil Some Water—Lots of It Summary

Pat Hobby is working on a polish job on a Western. The only line Pat can think to put in the scene is 'boil some water, lots of it'. The producer tells Pat to be sure anything medical in the script is authentic, so Pat goes to the infirmary to speak to the doctor. Unfortunately the doctor is not there, but a pretty young woman is. Pat convinces the girl to go to lunch with him so they can discuss the script. Over lunch, Pat happens to notice a man attempting to sit at the exclusive Big Table. Pat is shocked by this ignorance of studio etiquette and even more shocked by the executives' apparent inability to put an end to the man's outrageous behavior. Pat takes things in his own hands. Pat hits the man over the head with a metal tray. Unfortunately, it turns out the man was a popular writer who was playing a joke on the executives.

Boil Some Water—Lots of It Analysis

In the previous stories, Pat has done everything he could to get a job, blackmailing executives at the studio and stealing story ideas. In this story, Pat actually finds himself in a position of protecting the reputations of the same executives he feels no qualms about scamming. Touching on the theme of Hollywood politics and the theme of respect, Pat knows that only executives are allowed to eat at the Big Table in the commissary. Pat once had a place at that table and wishes he still did, but respects the fact that he is no longer considered one of the elite. However, when a man who appears to be an extra on one of the films attempts to sit there, Pat is outraged. Pat takes it upon himself to fix the situation. In an ironic twist, the man is not an extra but the writer of one of the big films being shot at the studio. Pat is once again the bad guy, even though this time he was trying to do the right thing.



Teamed With Genius

Teamed With Genius Summary

Berners hires Pat Hobby to help an English playwright write a screenplay for the studio. The playwright, Rene Wilcox, has never written a film before, so Pat feels somewhat superior to him. Pat tries for two days to get Wilcox to work, but the man does nothing but sleep all day. Then one day Wilcox comes to Pat and tells him he has finished the script on his own, working through the night. Wilcox will not show it to Pat, however, feeling that he does not need Pat's help. Pat writes a fake note to Wilcox, claiming his brothers have been killed in the war in order to get Wilcox out of his office. At the same time, Pat has the secretary steal the script for Pat to read. Instead of simply reading the script, however, Pat makes several changes to the dialogue rather than the structure, which was what he was hired to do.

On the way to show Berners the script, Pat runs into the studio bookie who wants him to place a bet. Pat brushes him off. In Berners' office, however, Pat learns that Berners knows he took the script without permission. Not only this, but the script that Pat has is an old one that the studio already turned down. Berners tells Pat his services are no longer needed. Wilcox is a talented writer who will be able to write his own ticket at the studio, once again underscoring Pat's growing uselessness.

Teamed With Genius Analysis

Pat is hired by Berners to help a playwright make the transition from playwriting to script writing. However, the writer does not really need Pat's help. True to Pat's personality, he refuses to be left out, thinking that if he helps to create a good script he will get a higher paying job at the studio. Pat refuses to sit back and allow the playwright to show him up. Pat stoops to a new low by telling the playwright that his brothers were killed in the war and then stole what he thought was his original script in order to make changes so he can claim to have inspired the better parts of the script. Unfortunately, everyone knows what Pat is up to and set him up by giving him the wrong script. The playwright is celebrated as being brilliant while poor Pat is once more pushed out the door, again underscoring how lost Pat is in the new world of talking movies.



Pat Hobby and Orson Welles

Pat Hobby and Orson Welles Summary

Everywhere Pat Hobby goes, people are talking about Orson Welles. Pat feels threatened by this new rising star, feeling as though Orson Welles is pushing him out. Pat goes to the studio and tries to get in, but the new security guards at the gates refuse him admittance. Pat tries to sneak in with a crowd, but again he is turned away. For several days Pat tries to get in and is continuously turned away. Pat is desperate to find some work to pay off his debts with Louie. Pat blames Orson Welles for his new woes. Finally, Pat sees the head of the studio, Mr. Marcus, drive up to the gate. Pat convinces Mr. Marcus to drive him onto the studio grounds. During the ride, Pat tries to convince Mr. Marcus that Orson Welles is bad news for the studio.

The following day, Pat is in a bar with a makeup artist from the studio, Jeff Boldini. Pat asks Jeff if he can borrow some money until he finds a job, but Jeff says Pat still owes him from the last time he loaned him money. Instead, Jeff offers to pay Pat if he will allow Jeff to dress him up to look like Orson Welles. Pat reluctantly agrees. After Jeff dresses Pat up, they go for a ride in a car. Jeff wants to test Pat's look with the people hanging around the studio, but does not tell Pat what he is up to. While they are driving, Mr. Marcus has a heart attack on the street. Pat is pushed out of his car in order for it to be used to take Mr. Marcus to the infirmary.

Pat Hobby and Orson Welles Analysis

Exploring Pat's character once more, the author shows Pat desperate to get a job in order to pay off his gambling debts but unable to even get onto the studio grounds. Pat goes as far as begging for help from the head of the studio, Mr. Marcus. Pat does not blame his troubles on himself or his gambling habit. Instead, Pat blames the new talent in town, Orson Welles. Pat believes that Orson Welles is responsible for pushing him out and for leaving him in a position where he cannot get respect, a theme of the stories, even from the security guards. In order to get a few bucks from a friend, Pat agrees to allow the friend to dress him up like Orson Welles. However, even as Orson Welles, Pat is pushed aside when Mr. Marcus has a heart attack. In a twist of irony, Pat passes as Orson Welles, but has the bad luck of being in the right place at the wrong time when Mr. Marcus needs a ride to infirmary, once again pushing him to the back burner even as Orson Welles.



Pat Hobby's Secret

Pat Hobby's Secret Summary

A studio producer, Mr. Banizon, is complaining that he had an idea that he bought from a writer and then hired another writer, the playwright R. Parke Woll, to write the script. However, just before the end of the script, Woll demanded more money. Banizon refused and Woll quit without finishing the script. The problem is, Woll told Banizon the end of the script, but he cannot remember it. Louie throws out several suggestions, but none that are helpful. In exchange for fifty bucks, Pat tells Banizon he will get the ending from Woll.

Pat tracks Woll down to a local bar and joins the group hanging around him. When Woll slips off to the bathroom some time later, Pat follows. Pat talks to Woll about the script, telling him that Banizon's secretary overheard the ending and that Banizon thinks he has a better idea on how to end the script. Woll claims there cannot be a better ending than his and he tells it to Pat. Then Woll realizes what Pat has done and attempts to hit him. Unfortunately, Woll hits another man who turns and throws Woll against a wall, killing him on impact. When Banizon learns that Pat knows the ending to the script, he offers to hire him on at the studio for a month at a thousand a week, nearly what he made in his heyday. However, when Pat goes to the inquest in Woll's death he is threatened by the wife of the man who killed Woll. Pat lies on the stand and then has a night filled with nightmares before meeting with Banizon. All the excitement has caused Pat to forget the end of the script, leaving him once again unemployed and destitute.

Pat Hobby's Secret Analysis

The tone of this story is a little more optimistic than the others up to this point. For once it seems Pat Hobby has the upper hand. Pat learns that a producer is in need of help and Pat is the one to give it to him. In exchange, Pat hopes to get hired on at the studio for a fraction of what he once made in his heyday. However, in the process of getting the information he needs, Pat witnesses a crime. Pat then lies on the stand during the inquest into the death. It seems that all the excitement has affected Pat's memory. In an ironic twist, Pat has forgotten the secret that could get him hired on at the studio once more. Pat, it turns out, is his own worst enemy.



Pat Hobby, Putative Father

Pat Hobby, Putative Father Summary

Pat Hobby is working at the studio, but not really doing anything, so Jack Berners asks him to show a couple of visitors around the studio. The two visitors are from India. In fact, the younger of the two is Pat Hobby's son, born during a brief marriage and then taken to India when Pat's ex-wife married the second richest man in India. The two visitors want to meet a famous actress currently filming a movie at the studio. Pat wants to show how influential he is at the studio, so he agrees to introduce them to the actress. Unfortunately, Pat is not that influential and is forced to sneak onto the set. In the process, Pat leads his two visitors through a set that was in the middle of filming. All three were taken to the security room. The visitors are not impressed with Pat's behavior.

Later, ashamed of himself but also angry that the visitors should think the whole thing was his fault, Pat goes to the hotel just in time to catch the visitors leaving. Pat's son tells him that his uncle has decided that because Pat is family, they should offer him an allowance. The young man tells Pat he will receive a monthly allowance as long as England is not at war, causing their fortune to revert to the British Empire. Unfortunately, England enters the Second World War the following morning.

Pat Hobby, Putative Father Analysis

This story shows another side of Pat, that of a father. However, Pat once again shows his character to the reader by seeing in his son not the opportunity to be a father, but the opportunity to scam an allowance to allow him to survive without working for the rest of his life. Pat tries to show off how influential he is at the studio, but instead reveals how little influence he has. Pat sneaks his visitors onto a movie set and walks across a set being filmed. Later, Pat's son tells him that his family has decided to give him an allowance anyway, even though he is clearly a mistake waiting to happen. However, there is a stipulation that Pat can only get the money as long as England does not go to war. Ironically, England goes to war the following day. Pat once again comes out the loser in the situation, not without some help on his own part.



The Homes of the Stars

The Homes of the Stars Summary

Pat Hobby's car breaks down on the same corner where a man sells brochures showing the locations of homes of the stars. The man closes up for lunch, but leaves his umbrella and one of his brochures. Pat sits under the umbrella. Minutes later, a car pulls up and a couple asks Pat to show them the homes of the stars. Despite the fact that Pat does not know where any of the stars' homes are, he agrees in exchange for five dollars. Pat directs the driver to a lesser known actor's home while explaining to the couple that he did not do this for a living. Pat tells them he is a writer, but that the Screen Playwriters' Guild is on strike so he cannot write. The car pulls up to the lesser star's home just as the man is leaving. The man recognizes Pat and calls out to him. Pat waves, and then tells the couple they are out of luck and should move on. The woman is insistent on seeing Shirley Temple's house. Unfortunately, Pat does not know where Shirley Temple lives. Pat has the driver stop at a drug store, supposedly to call Shirley to make sure she is home. In reality, Pat buys a bottle of gin.

Pat directs the chauffeur to Shirley Temple's house, but discovers the house is surrounded by a high fence. Pat has the chauffeur go to another house down the block that is not fenced. Pat checks the front door and when he finds it open, he directs the couple inside. The couple becomes suspicious that the house is not Shirley Temple's when they notice only one child's room when they know Shirley has a brother. Pat distracts them, then he sees Mr. Marcus walking up the front steps. Pat quickly runs out of the house, leaving the couple behind, hoping no one will be able to figure out his identity.

The Homes of the Stars Analysis

Pat's car has broken down, so he is desperate, not unlike his behavior in several other stories. Also like the other stories, Pat chooses to run a scam in order to make a few bucks. Pat is mistaken for a tour guide for the homes of the stars and he decides to play along in order to make five bucks. Unfortunately, Pat does not know any stars, once again showing his lack of influence in Hollywood, and ends up taking the couple to a house that just happens to be accessible. Ironically enough, the house turns out to belong to Mr. Marcus, the head of the studio where Pat works off and on. Once again, Pat is his own worst enemy, putting himself in a position of upsetting the head of the studio and nearly guaranteeing he will never work at that studio again.



Pat Hobby Does His Bit

Pat Hobby Does His Bit Summary

Pat goes to an actor friend and asks for money in order to keep the finance company from repossessing his car. The actor is reluctant but finally agrees just to get Pat off his back. As Pat goes to leave, the director on the set calls action. Pat gets caught in the scene and no one notices until the female star of the movie has left the studio. In order to make all the scenes sequential, the director decides that Pat has to appear in all the scenes that his actor friend was originally set to do. Unfortunately, it turns out that Pat's character is supposed to be run over by a car. Pat objects, but the director is so angry with him for upsetting the production of the film that he refuses to listen to his objections. Pat lays down in a ditch for the scene and passes out as the car drives over him. When Pat wakes, he is still in the ditch. Everyone has forgotten about him. It turns out the male star of the movie broke his leg during the scene.

Pat Hobby Does His Bit Analysis

Once again Pat gets himself into trouble. Pat is on the set of a movie begging for a loan when he finds himself forced to be part of a scene in the film. Pat then finds out that he must play the character for the remainder of the film and get run over by a car. Pat's bad luck seems to know no bounds. Not only this, but during the shooting of his scene, the male star of the movie breaks his leg, causing Pat to be forgotten in his ditch beneath the car. It seems like a bad thing to have happened to poor Pat, to be forgotten in that way. Ironically, Pat believes it is actually good luck because of the excitement the broken leg caused and the cool scene it must have been on film. The scene must have been natural and dramatic, saving the movie in Pat's point of view, due to the fact that in Pat's silent film days, directors often set actors up in surprising situations in order to get their natural reactions on film.



Pat Hobby's Preview

Pat Hobby's Preview Summary

Pat wants tickets to a preview of a film he co-wrote with Ward Wainwright. Unfortunately Wainwright got the last set of tickets available. Not only that, but Pat's co-authorship was limited to changing the syntax of a few sentences and nothing more. As a result, Wainwright wants Pat's name taken off the screen credits. Berners tells Pat to come back later in the afternoon and he will see if he can find some tickets. In the meantime, Pat is walking around the studio lot when he runs into a young actress. Pat impresses the young woman with a list of credits, most of which are not really his. Later, while watching an actor rehearse on a set, Pat invites the young woman to attend the preview with him that night.

When Pat returns to Berners' office, the secretary gives him an envelope with tickets for the preview in it. The secretary says the tickets were Wainwright's but that he returned them in a fit of anger. Later that night, Pat picks up the young actress and takes her to dinner. Afterward they arrive at the preview a little late. At the door, the doorman refuses to allow them to enter because the tickets Pat has are for a burlesque show downtown. Pat insists he be let in since he wrote the movie. As the doorman continues to refuse, Wainwright comes out of the theatre. Wainwright says the movie is so bad he no longer wants his name associated with. Wainwright gives the doorman his ticket stubs and tells him to let Pat inside. Pat grabs the girl and goes inside.

Pat Hobby's Preview Analysis

Pat was once a great writer during the time of silent movies. However, dialogue and plots have caused Pat to lose what respect, a theme of the book, he once might have had. Now Pat finds himself begging for tickets to a preview of a movie he wrote when once it would have been something Pat would have taken for granted. Not only this, but Pat's co-writer wants his name taken off the screen credits, underscoring what the reader more than likely already suspects, that Pat did little to help write the screenplay. However, when the movie proves to be bad, the other writer is more than happy to give Pat all the credit, where before he did not want Pat to have any credit. This touches on the theme of Hollywood politics as well, illustrating how people in Hollywood often try to take all the credit for what is good, but want nothing to do with the bad. Pat does not care, however. Pat is just pleased to be associated with a movie after having to fight for so long for just a few hundred a week fixing other people's work.



No Harm Trying

No Harm Trying Summary

Pat Hobby is sitting in his tiny apartment when his landlord brings him a message from the studio. Pat is informed by a studio executive that his wife is in the hospital after having tried to kill herself. This wife is a girl Pat had only been married to for a few weeks and then she had run off and married someone else. The girl's husband and child were killed, leaving her depressed. The studio, for whom the girl once worked, wants to help her, so they are giving Pat a job and donating half his salary to pay the girl's hospital bills. While hanging out at the studio, pretending to be doing something productive, Pat runs into a young actress who has been on contract for quite some time, but has yet to star in a movie. Pat also meets a director who has not worked in months, and a producer searching for the perfect project. Pat also learns that one of the callboys has a brilliant idea for a movie. Pat brings all these people together in order to pitch a movie to the studio executive. However, Pat learns that the actress had not worked because she cannot speak English. The director has not worked because he has a drug problem. Finally, the callboy is already under contract to sell his story idea to the studio, with a writer better than Pat Hobby. The producer has bought a movie he cannot make.

No Harm Trying Analysis

In another ironic story, Pat proves that even when he tries to do the right thing, he is unlucky. Pat meets an actress and a director who have a contract but have not worked in months. Pat also meets a callboy with a brilliant story idea and a producer with money to spend. Pat brings them all together, hoping to write a movie they can make together. Unfortunately, it turns out there is a reason why the actress and director have not worked. Not only this, but the callboy has already sold his story to the studio and it will be written by someone with more talent than Pat. Pat comes out on the short end of the stick once more. Hollywood politics, a theme of the story, strikes again by holding Pat back when he tries to play the game, but does not gather all the information he needs in order to make his scheme work.

A Patriotic Short

A Patriotic Short Summary

Pat is working at the studio writing a scene in which the nephew of Robert E. Lee accepts a U.S. commission from President McKinley. Writing the scene causes Pat to recall a time in his heyday in which the President of the United States visited the studio. During the president's visit, he was asked to sit at the Big Table during lunch in order to represent the writers at the studio. Later, when the president attended a party at the studio heads house, which happened to be next door to Pat's house. Pat went out into his backyard and spoke to the president over his fence, discussing his swimming pool, which was a symbol of success at the time.

A Patriotic Short Analysis

This story is the shortest one in the collection. In this story, Pat becomes nostalgic as he remembers a time when he was well respected around the studio, touching on the theme of respect. Pat was not only welcomed at the Big Table at lunch, but he spoke to the President of the United States about the swimming pool he once had behind his large house. Swimming pools were once a status symbol in Hollywood and Pat had one, proving that he was a success in the days of silent movies. Unfortunately, Pat's life is much different now, but he still enjoys remembering these better times. Perhaps this suggests some growth on Pat's part through the stories. It might also simply show some motivation on Pat's part, explaining why he feels so put upon when people do not treat him with respect.

On the Trail of Pat Hobby

On the Trail of Pat Hobby Summary

Pat does not have a hat and has no money to buy a new one, but feels that he needs to have one in order to garner respect at the studio. Pat decides to steal a hat from the hat room at the commissary. Pat steals a simple grey hat, believing no one will miss it, only to learn later that the hat belongs to Mr. Marcus. Hanging around the writer's building until the search for the missing hat dies down, Pat learns that one of the producers is desperate for an original title for a new screenplay. Pat feels this is below him, but when he learns it is worth fifty dollars, decides to give it a try. Pat offers Grand Hotel, but Berners hears Grand Motel and likes it, offering Pat the money. Pat feels sick, afraid someone will realize he has stolen Mr. Marcus's hat, so he leaves before being paid.

On the Trail of Pat Hobby Analysis

Pat steals a hat, possibly thinking that the studio owes him something as simple as a hat. Pat feels that he gets no respect, a theme of the book, without his hat. Unfortunately, the hat Pat steals belongs to Mr. Marcus, the head of the studio. Pat is trying to get out of the studio when he is called into an office to think up a title for a new script. Pat comes up with the perfect title, but is too afraid of getting caught with the hat to stay around to collect his money. Pat does promise to come back, however, showing that his desire for money has not changed.

Fun in an Artist's Studio

Fun in an Artist's Studio Summary

At the studio commissary, Pat Hobby meets a young female artist who wants to paint him over a powerful studio executive. Pat is reluctant, afraid the young woman will think he is trying to take advantage of her. The artist only wants to paint the desperation in Pat's face. However, throughout their session in her hotel bungalow, Pat becomes cocky and jokes about trying to take advantage of the artist. Finally the artist calls in a guard who has been sent by the studio to be sure Pat behaved and has him order Pat to undress. Pat finds himself forced to either undress or forgo the money he was supposed to make at the studio that day. Pat undresses, causing his desperation to reappear on his face, giving the artist exactly what she wanted.

Fun in an Artist's Studio Analysis

Pat is asked to sit for an artist. Pat begins to think that he is someone important to be asked to do such a thing, causing him to feel better about himself and to feel some kind of superiority to the artist, who is female. The artist does not want this, she wants the desperate Pat she met at the studio. In order to get that desperation, the artist humiliates Pat by forcing him to undress. Once again Pat is put in his place with Hollywood politics, a theme of the book. Hollywood made Pat the desperate man he is and it is Hollywood that is keeping him there through his insistence on being a writer and his poor ability to write.



Two Old-Timers

Two Old-Timers Summary

Pat Hobby runs into Phil Macedon on the street. Phil was a star at the studio at the same time Pat was a successful writer. Unfortunately, Phil does not remember Pat. Pat makes a scene, trying to get Phil to remember him, causing a cop to come along and arrest them both for public intoxication. While they are waiting in the jail for the police supervisor to arrive, the arresting cop mentions how he saw Phil in a war picture and how a particular scene helped the cop's wife understand his experiences in the war. Pat announces that he was on set the day that scene was shot and that the director had simply dropped Phil into a hole and filmed him attempting to get out, giving the scene its realistic feel. Pat insists that Phil is just another old-timer, just like him.

Two Old-Timers Analysis

The author makes a comparison in this story between Pat and another old-timer from Pat's days of glory at the studio. Pat runs into an old actor from his glory days who claims to not remember him. Both men are arrested. During their incarceration, Pat points out how the actor was famous during the silent film days because directors would trick him into reacting on film rather than acting. Pat insists that the actor is as washed up as he is and did not make the transition into talking films any better than Pat did. It makes Pat feel better about himself to make this comparison, proving he was not the only one to fall apart when films become talkies. Pat's actions go to his motivations, explaining to the reader while he continues to return to the studio. Pat had a good life once and he is continuing to try to recapture that magic.

Mightier Than the Sword

Mightier Than the Sword Summary

Pat overhears a producer and writer arguing over a script only to find himself roped in to replacing the writer. The producer tells him his idea about writing a script about a composer who wrote a famous song for the love of his life. Pat and the producer work on the script for a month, but find themselves stuck without an ending. To make things worse, the studio wants to begin production in less than a week. The producer finds the first writer's script and decides to use it, only he decides to put his secretary's name on it rather than give credit to either Pat or the original writer. The original writer is upset and Pat finds himself consoling him, feeling that, despite everything, things went his way since he got paid for a month's work.

Mightier Than the Sword Analysis

This story reveals that Pat is not the only one who gets the short end of the stick sometimes. Touching again on the theme of Hollywood politics, a producer fires his writer because they cannot get along and then hires Pat to replace him. Pat is unable to come up with a script quick enough, so the producer decides to use the original script, only he gives credit to his secretary. Pat once again is shorted, as well as losing a little more respecting, touching on that theme as well. However, another writer is also disrespected, giving Pat the chance to feel somewhat superior to the man since he already knows how things work and the other writer does not.



Pat Hobby's College Days

Pat Hobby's College Days Summary

Pat Hobby's latest job is about to end. Pat is told he can continue his job at the studio if he comes up with an original idea. Pat hears that Berners wants to do a story about UWC, so he decides to go over there and see what he can learn about the athletic department for a possible story. While Pat is meeting with the athletic department, his secretary is trying to get rid of all his old liquor bottles he used over the past month. Pat is invited to a meeting with the school administrators where they are interviewing a young athlete accused of stealing. Pat pitches a story about the young man when his secretary walks into the room with the liquor bottles. Aware that the administrators do not approve of drinking, Pat proudly throws the bag of bottles over his shoulder and leaves, knowing he will never be able to do a story about UWC.

Pat Hobby's College Days Analysis

Pat Hobby is being proactive again, trying to come up with a script idea in order to continue working for the studio. Unfortunately, Pat ends up sabotaging himself once again when his secretary shows up with his old liquor bottles, ending his possible alliance with a school that frowns on drinking. Pat has not grown up, nor has he done anything to approve his personal situation. The reader imagines Pat will continue to struggle, begging friends for money and scheming to get jobs at the studio. However, Pat comes off as a somewhat sympathetic character, a victim of the politics of Hollywood, a theme of the book. The reader almost wants to see Pat succeed, at least once, knowing well that he will not.



Characters

Pat Hobby appears in All

Pat Hobby was once a successful writer in Hollywood when movies were silent. However, once movies had sound, Pat could not write the kind of dialogue or plot that these scripts required. Pat lost his great house, his swimming pool, his wives, and began drinking and gambling away the small amount of money he manages to make fixing other writer's scripts. Everyone at the studio knows that Pat can no longer write the way he once did, but many of the executives are fond of Pat and find his many schemes to get work amusing. As a result, many of these executives will hire Pat for just about any reason they can come up with.

Pat is lazy. Pat does not like to work even when he has a job. Pat will often take someone else's script, change the syntax of a sentence, and call it his own. This way Pat gets his name put on a script and receives credit. However, many times the other writers are aware of what Pat is doing and either stop him or scheme against him to keep him from getting the credit he so desperately wants. At other times, writers give Pat credit for films that turn out badly.

Pat has lived a difficult life. Many of the bad things that happen to Pat are his own fault. Sometimes Pat will blackmail an executive without having all the information or will scheme to create a script without realizing the idea belongs to someone else. Pat is also an alcoholic and a gambler. These things leave Pat in debt, causing him a desperation that makes his scheming to get a job even more important. Pat is not good at scheming, however, and constantly finds himself coming out on the short end of his own schemes.

Jack Berners appears in A Man in the Way, Teamed with Genius, Pat Hobby and Orson We

Jack Berners is an executive at the studio where Pat works off again, on again. Jack Berners has a soft place in his heart for Pat and often extends a job offer to him when he knows that Pat is desperate. Berners shows up in many of the short stories, but not all. In some of the stories, Berners is merely mentioned as the executive who has contracted the script Pat is currently working on. Berners is the one who hires Pat to work with the playwright in Teamed With Genius, partnering Pat with the playwright who has never written a script before. This playwright, however, manages to write the script on his own without any help from Pat, leaving Pat feeling as though he has been left out of something that could have been important to his career. Berners sets Pat up, catching him stealing a copy of what he believes to be the new script, only to tell Pat he stole an old script that had been rejected, revealing to the reader that Pat does not even know bad writing when he sees it.



Louie, the Studio Bookie appears in Teamed with Genius, Pat Hobby and Orson Welles, Pat Hobby's

Louie is the studio bookie. Louie is the one with whom Pat makes a majority of his bets on the horses. Pat likes to bet on horses, but his luck with the horses is no better than his luck in other avenues of his life. Pat often owes Louie a great deal of money until the day Louie stops taking bets from Pat. Louie is an important part of Pat's life even though he does not have a huge role in the stories. Louie is important because gambling is hugely important to Pat. Pat likes to gamble away his meager earnings because he believes one day he will win a great deal of money and be able to live like he once did. Unfortunately, Pat never makes enough money to change his situation.

Harold Marcus appears in Pat Hobby and Orson Welles, The Homes of the Stars, On the T

Harold Marcus is the head of the studio. When the reader first meets Mr. Marcus, it is while he is sitting in a car gaining access to the studio. Pat begs Mr. Marcus for a ride onto the studio grounds and a pass to get him past security. Mr. Marcus never comes through with the pass, but Pat finds another way onto the studio grounds. Later, Pat finds himself acting as a tour guide to the houses of the stars in Hollywood. Afraid to take his customers to the real Shirley Temple home, Pat takes them to another home that is more accessible. Unfortunately this home happens to belong to Mr. Marcus. Later, Pat learns that a hat he stole belongs to Mr. Marcus. It seems every time Pat's luck turns really bad, Mr. Marcus is right there. The reader has the feeling that eventually Pat will cross Mr. Marcus one too many times and be banned from the studio forever.

Mr. Banizon appears in Pat Hobby's Secret

Mr. Banizon is a producer with the studio who has a problem. Mr. Banizon has half a script written but does not know the ending and his writer is refusing to finish it for him. Pat sees a chance to make a quick buck and decides to help Mr. Banizon out. However, before Pat can tell Mr. Banizon the end of the script and take advantage of the job Banizon has arranged for him, Pat forgets the story. Banizon was willing to pay Pat more than a third of the salary he was making in his heyday. The salary would have changed Pat's life. Unfortunately, Pat became so frightened of the man who killed the first writer that he forgot the one thing that would have changed his life.

Pat Hobby's Son appears in Pat Hobby, Putitive Father

Pat Hobby has been married three times. One of these wives gave birth to a son shortly before leaving Pat. The woman then moved to India and married a rich man there who adopted her son. The son returns to California and goes to the studio to have a tour.



Berners instructs Pat to conduct the tour. The son, John Brown Hobby, is not impressed with his father. John wants to meet one of the hottest actresses in Hollywood, but Pat nearly gets them all arrested when he attempts to make this happen. John feels sorry for his father, however, and convinces his uncle to give Pat an allowance. Unfortunately, England goes to war the following day, tying up the uncle's money in British banks, leaving Pat destitute once more.

Harry Gooddorp appears in Pat Hobby's Christmas Wish

Harry Gooddorp is an executive at the studio where Pat sometimes works. While Pat is working over Christmas Eve, the secretary sent to him turns out to be Gooddorp's old secretary. The woman is upset because Gooddorp recently replaced her with a younger woman. The woman tells Pat about a letter she once stole a copy of in order to have something to hold over Gooddorp's head if it were ever necessary. Pat decides to use this letter to blackmail Gooddorp into giving him a producer's job. Unfortunately, Pat does not have all the information he needs and finds out that the letter was not an admission of guilt in a murder plot as Pat thought, but the admission of guilt in letting a friend down. Pat is humiliated and left without the producer job he wanted.

Orson Welles appears in Pat Hobby and Orson Welles

Orson Welles is a writer/director in Hollywood. About the time the stories are set, Orson Welles was just beginning to become popular. Pat Hobby hears Orson's name everywhere he goes and is beginning to feel as though Orson is pushing him out. Pat resents Orson Welles and warns everyone that he is just a fad that will pass. One day a friend of Pat's from the costume department wants to dress Pat up to look like Orson Welles. The costume works well, convincing everyone that Pat is Orson. Unfortunately, Mr. Marcus, the head of the studio, has a heart attack and causes Pat, as Orson, to be pushed aside in order to make room in his car for Mr. Marcus.

Gyp McCarthy appears in Pat Hobby Does His Bit

Gyp McCarthy is an actor and a friend of Pat's. Gyp is down on his luck just like Pat and is fighting to get the roles required to help him survive. One day Pat goes to Gyp to ask for a loan. Gyp gives it to him, but as Pat is leaving, he finds himself stuck on the set during the filming of a scene. Pat is filmed in the role Gyp was supposed to do. When the female star leaves the set, Pat is forced to take Gyp's role for the rest of the movie in the interest of continuity. Gyp is left out in the cold, without the pay he needed from the job. Unfortunately for Pat, Gyp's role included a scene in which he was to be run over by a car. Pat is forced to do this scene and finds himself forgotten in a ditch when the male star of the movie breaks his leg.



Dutch Waggoner appears in No Harm Trying

Dutch Waggoner is a director at the studio where Pat sometimes works. Pat has known Dutch for many years and is surprised to learn he has not worked in many months. Pat and Dutch grumble together, complaining about the politics in Hollywood. Pat then gets an idea to write a script and to have Dutch direct it. Pat even finds an actress to star in the movie, a producer to pay for it, and an idea stolen from a callboy. Unfortunately, Pat does not know that the actress does not speak English. Also unfortunate, Pat learns that Dutch is only on contract because he is the cousin of one of the executive's wife. Dutch has a drug problem that causes him to be unreliable during the filming of his movies.



Objects/Places

Gooddorf's Letter appears in Pat Hobby's Christmas Wish

Harry Gooddorf, an executive at the movie studio where Pat Hobby infrequently works, wrote a letter years ago implying his participation in a murder. Pat Hobby tries to use this letter to advance his own career, but Gooddorf refuses to be blackmailed, especially by an innocent letter.

Magazine Article appears in A Man in the Way

A female writer tells Pat about a scene she plans to do based on a magazine article about ancient artifacts being sent to Europe to be put on display. Pat steals the idea, unaware that the female writer is a close friend of the studio executive.

Big Table

There is a table in the commissary where all the executives and bigwigs eat. Pat is outraged when an extra attempts to sit at this elite table, only to find out it was only a joke.

Ballet's Shoe Script appears in Teamed With Genius

Pat Hobby is hired to write a script with an English playwright, The Ballet Shoes. Pat tries to make the script his, hoping it will help him get a better job. However, Pat's scheme is uncovered and he is made a fool of.

Inquest appears in Pat Hobby's Secret

An inquest is an investigation into a death, such as the death of the writer in Pat Hobby's Secret.

Pat's Car appears in The Home of the Stars, Pat Hobby Does His Bit

Pat has an old car that often breaks down. Unfortunately Pat cannot afford a new car and he is still paying off the finance company for his current car.



Mr. Marcus's Hat appears in On the Trail of Pat Hobby

Pat steals Mr. Marcus's hat, unaware of who it belonged to, when he found himself in need of a hat in order to garner respect from the people at the studio.

Liquor Bottles appears in Pat Hobby's College Days

In Pat Hobby's College Days, Pat has his secretary try to get rid of the bottles he drank during the month he was employed at the studio. The secretary is unable to find a place to put the bottles and ends up bringing them back to Pat.

Writer's Building appears in All

Pat often works and hangs out at the writer's building located on the grounds of the movie studio.

Studio appears in All

Pat Hobby works for a movie studio that employs him from time to time in order to fix the scripts of other writers. At one time Pat was the best silent film writer at the studio, but has not had the distinction since movies began to talk.

Santa Anita appears in Teamed With Genius, Pat Hobby, Putitive Father

Santa Anita is where the racetrack where Pat often goes to gamble is located.

Hollywood appears in All

Hollywood is where many movies are made.

Themes

Hollywood Politics

At the time in which these stories are set, movies had just made the successful transition from silent action to talking action. Pat Hobby was a successful silent film writer, talented in creating scenes that were both exciting and told an interesting story. However, when movies introduced sound, Pat Hobby found he was not as talented at writing dialogue as some of the younger writers who entered the industry after him. As a result, Pat has gone from being one of the highest paid writers of his time to barely getting along on the few pity jobs he is offered. Pat does not believe that it is his own writing skills that are the problem. Pat believes the problem is the hierarchy among the studio executives.

Pat believes that writers are the lowest spot on the totem pole when it comes to Hollywood. The executives are first, then the actors, directors, then the writers. It is because of this hierarchy that Pat cannot get any work. It does not have anything to do with the fact that Pat has not written a decent script in five years or that he has not had an original idea in that amount of time. Pat is part of the old school and he did not make the transition well. However, Pat believes that everyone in Hollywood wants to keep him down, to keep him from being successful. As a result, Pat is often bad mouthing the hierarchy while begging them for jobs.

At the same time that Pat believes he is lost in Hollywood due to politics, he also deeply believes in the traditions of Hollywood. While Pat is willing to blackmail and beg for jobs, he is not willing to overstep the traditions that make Hollywood a sacred place. For example, when Pat goes to lunch it never occurs to him to sit at the unofficial executives table. People must earn their position at that table and Pat fully believes that although he once had a place at that table, he no longer can enjoy that privilege. This contradicts Pat's behavior in some ways, but also shows how deep his respect for the movie business and Hollywood politics goes.

Alcoholism

Pat Hobby is an alcoholic. Everyone knows that Pat Hobby is an alcoholic. Pat believes that no one knows about his drinking. Whenever the studio gives Pat a job for whatever reason he often spends the entire time either drinking or sleeping off a hangover. Pat tries to work, but his work normally consists of changing the syntax of a sentence someone else wrote rather than writing a new, original sentence of his own making. Pat more than likely has not written an original sentence since movies started talking. Along with his alcoholism, Pat is a gambler. Pat often gets jobs in order to pay off gambling debts.



Pat came up in Hollywood when movies were just becoming a large part of American culture, before they had sound. Pat was a very good writer of silent movies, helping write the movies that were often formulaic and overdone. As a result, Pat was well liked among his co-workers and respected by Hollywood executives. However, when movies began to have sound and needed to be more original, Pat discovered that he was obsolete. Almost overnight, Pat lost all respect and the status he had fought for in Hollywood. Pat found himself poor and without the friends he had had before. It is because of this shift in status that Pat found himself without a job and a reason to start drinking.

Respect

Once upon a time, Pat Hobby was a well respected writer in Hollywood. However, that changed when movies began to talk. Pat discovered that he could not write movies with dialogue as well as he could the formulaic plots of the silent movies. When this happened, Pat was forced out of the studio by the people who once valued him as one of the best writers in Hollywood. Pat lost respect. Pat continues to lose respect every day he shows up to the studio begging for jobs to pay off his mounting gambling debts.

Pat also lost respect for those who pushed him out. Despite the fact that Pat still relies on these executives to offer him the few jobs that help him make ends meet, Pat does not respect these men. Pat makes fun of these men behind their backs and attempts to blackmail them into giving him jobs. Respect is not a part of Pat's everyday life. However, it is respect that Pat craves the most. Pat constantly schemes to get his name on original scripts in order to make it seem he has risen back to the top of the writing pool. Unfortunately, Pat is found out nearly every time he does this, losing still that much more respect in the eyes of the studio executives.

Style

Point of View

The Pat Hobby stories are written in the third person point of view. The stories normally remain with only one narrator, Pat Hobby. However, a few stories tell parts of the plot from the eyes of minor characters in order to show the reader things that cannot be seen from Pat's viewpoint. Pat's point of view is often unreliable, leaving the reader with the impression that Pat is an honest talent who has been misunderstood by those around him until the final sentences of the story when the truth of Pat's laziness and scheming can be seen.

The point of view in these stories work because they give the reader a close look at the stories from Pat's point of view. Since Pat's point of view is often unreliable, the reader is occasionally surprised to see how things turn out for Pat. Pat is delusional, believing that his point of view is always the best. Pat thinks that he is a good writer who has lost respect in Hollywood because of politics, not because he has not had an original idea in many years. It is this delusion that makes Pat unreliable and keeps the reader guessing until the final sentence of each story.

Setting

The majority of the stories are set at the studios of a major movie company. Pat was once a successful writer for silent movies and continues to beg jobs at the studio, though rarely writing an original script. Pat often spends most of the story in the writer's offices, small offices that are reassigned nearly every week as writers come and go. Occasionally the stories wander to the sets of the various movies being shot at the time and to the other buildings at the studio, including the commissary. All of these things combine to give the reader a real sense of what life would be like for a writer for a major movie company.

The setting of the stories works because the main character is a writer in the movie industry. Pat Hobby was a writer during the silent movie age and continues to try to find jobs with the studio now that movies have begun to talk. Pat is not a good dialogue writer; therefore, he is not hired by the studio often. However, Pat loves the studio and cannot imagine trying to get a job anywhere else, including with another movie studio. Therefore the setting of these stories is almost as important as the characters themselves.

Language and Meaning

The language of these stories is simple English that is a little more refined than modern readers might be accustomed to. The stories were written in the early 40s, therefore the language tends to reflect the language of the time. There is little slang used throughout



the stories, including the dialogue, but the language does include a few antiquated phrases that some modern readers might not recognize.

The language of the stories works because it is appropriate for the time in which the stories are set. The stories are set in the early 40s, the same time in which they were written, therefore the language is appropriate to the stories. Some modern readers might not be familiar with some of the phrases, but most of these phrases are explained by the way in which they are placed in the dialogue or exposition of the story. The language is easy for most readers to understand and makes the stories enjoyable even for the youngest modern reader.

Structure

The book is divided into seventeen short stories, placed in the book in the same order in which they appeared in Esquire magazine between January 1940 through May of 1941. Each story is self contained, introduced by each one's specific title. The stories are told in a combination of exposition and dialogue. Each story has a well defined plot, each containing only one plot with no subplots.

The structure of the book is simple and easy for the reader to understand. Each story has its own section and is fully self contained as it would have been when it first appeared in Esquire. There is an introduction at the first of the book that explains how the stories came to be written and why, as well as correspondence between the writer and the editor of the magazine. At the end of the book there is a full story that shows Fitzgerald's edits in order to give the reader an idea of how much of a perfectionist Fitzgerald was.



Quotes

"It was Christmas Eve in the studio. By eleven o'clock in the morning, Santa Claus had called on most of the huge population according to each one's deserts." Pat Hobby's Christmas Wish, p. 1

"Pat Hobby could always get on the lot. He had worked there fifteen years on and off—chiefly off during the past five—and most of the studio police knew him." A Man in the Way, p. 13

"He was on a 'polish job', about the only kind he got nowadays. He was to repair a messy sequence in a hurry, but the word 'hurry' neither frightened nor inspired him for Pat had been in Hollywood since he was thirty—now he was forty-nine." "Boil Some Water—Lots of It", p. 21

"The words fell wild and unreal on Pat's burdened soul. But even though he now knew at first hand what came next, he did not think that he could go on from there." "Boil Some Water—Lots of It", p. 28

"With a glow, he thought warm thoughts. He had done almost what he had been hired to do—though his hand had accidentally fallen upon the dialogue rather than the structure. But how could Berners tell that the structure wasn't Pat's?" Teamed with Genius, pg. 37

"There is an old Chaplin picture about a crowded street car where the entrance of one man at the rear forces another out in front. A similar image came into Pat's mind in the ensuing days whenever he thought of Orson Welles. Welles was in; Hobby was out." Pat Hobby and Orson Welles, p. 45

"Distress in Hollywood is endemic and always acute." Pat Hobby's Secret, p. 52

"In order to borrow money one must choose the time and place. It is a difficult business, for example, when the borrower is cockeyed, or has muscles, or a conspicuous shiner. One could continue indefinitely but the inauspicious occasions can be catalogued as one—it is exceedingly difficult to borrow money when one needs it." Pat Hobby Does His Bit, p. 81

"To a rising young screen poet this might have been a crushing blow but Pat was made of sterner stuff." Pat Hobby's Preview, p. 93



"The prospect of a job did something to Pat. It anesthetized the crumbled, struggling remnants of his manhood, and inoculated him instead with a bland, easy-going confidence." No Harm Trying, p. 102

"Then he bent down over his desk, his shoulders shaking as he thought of that happy day when he had had a swimming pool." A Patriotic Short, p. 120

"We are in the midst of technicalities." Mightier Than the Sword, p. 144

Topics for Discussion

Who is Pat Hobby? Why does he want to work for the studio even though he is clearly unable to produce original works? What does the studio mean to Pat Hobby? Why does Pat refuse to look for work anywhere else?

Why is Pat always in need of work? Why does Pat not have any money left from when he was more successful? What are Pat's vices? How do these vices affect Pat's life? Who was Pat before he fell victim to his vices?

Why do the studio executives always give Pat a job? Do they feel sorry for Pat? Why or why not? Why is Pat always blackmailing the studio executives? Does Pat have respect for these executives? How does he show it?

What is a silent film? How is a silent film different from a modern film? How could a silent film be easier to write? What is more difficult about a speaking film? Why does Pat Hobby have trouble making the transition from silent to talking films?

Discuss Hollywood. How is Hollywood like a micro community? How was Hollywood different in Pat Hobby's time than it is now? How is it the same? Would a man like Pat Hobby survive in Hollywood today? How or why not?

Discuss Fitzgerald. How are the themes in these stories similar to the themes in Fitzgerald's life? How does Fitzgerald compare to Pat Hobby? How is Fitzgerald different? Is Fitzgerald making fun of Hollywood in these stories? How are Fitzgerald's own experiences referenced in these stories?

Discuss irony. What is irony? How would you define irony in relation to Pat Hobby? How many times do you notice irony in these short stories? How does Fitzgerald use irony? What is Fitzgerald's purpose in using irony in these stories?