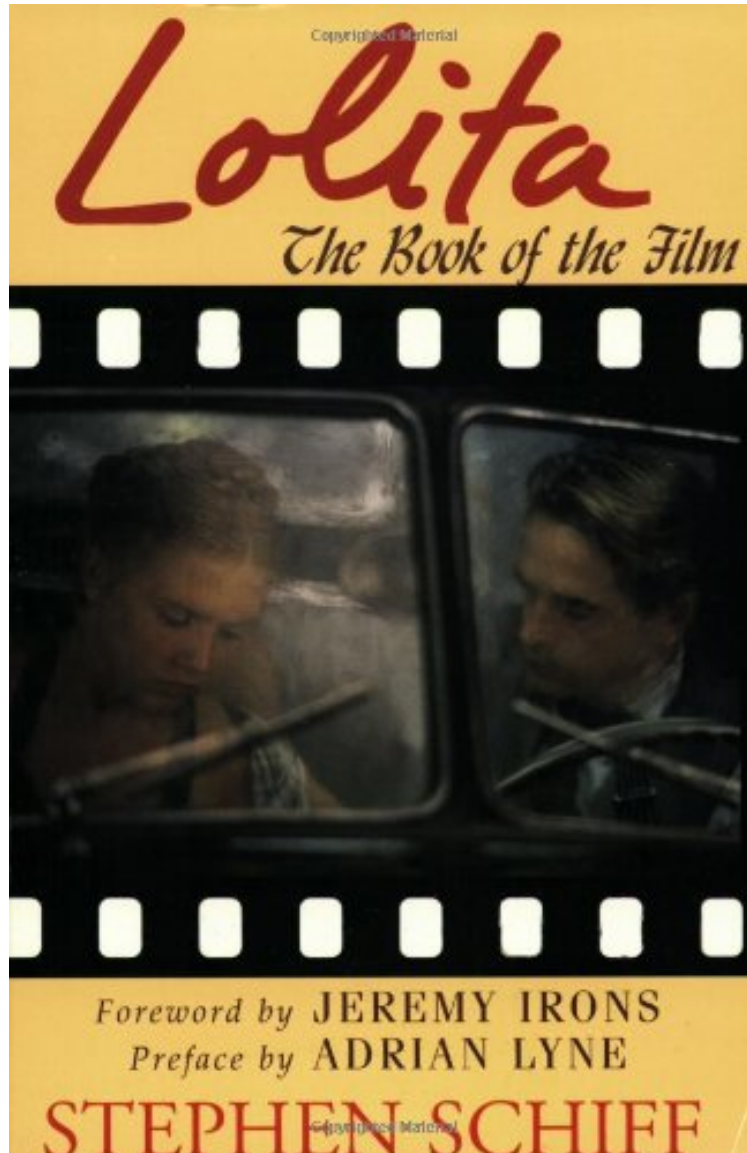


(Download) Lolita: The Book of the Film

## Lolita: The Book of the Film

*Stephen Schiff*

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#2633919 in Books Applause Theatre n Cinema Books 2000-04-01 2000-04-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .60 x 6.00l, .91 #File Name: 1557833540256 pagesLolita (The Book of the Film) Applause Books Series Softcover Written by Stephen SchiffForeword by Jeremy Irons, preface by Adrian LyneBased on the novel by Vladimir Nabokov, Schiff tells the astounding story behind the most controversial movie of our time75 movie stillsLike Nabokov's novel, it is an eloquent tragedy laced with wit and a serious, disturbing work of art | File size: 59.Mb

**Stephen Schiff : Lolita: The Book of the Film** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lolita: The Book of the Film:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Invaluable to Anyone Interested in the "Lolita Saga" By John Buchanan

By "Lolita Saga" I mean not just Nabokov's fairy tale (as he says all great novels are) but the story of how the novel and the films of Lyne and Kubrick came to be. From Nabokov's novel onward, all attempts to tell the story of the doomed Humbert and the doomed Lolita (and the doomed Charlotte and the deservedly doomed Quilty) have faced headwinds from cowardly money-men and ignorant critics and censors who condemned with their eyes and ears as primly closed as their minds. Lyne's film fortunately survived those gales. It is also worthwhile to note how Lyne's film diverges from this screenplay. Some of the scenes cut from the movie appear as "Bonus Material" on the DVD. Others just disappeared. Others were changed for filming. But all are part of the overall story of the film, and the (somewhat) conflicting visions of its contributors. I have a couple of nits to pick with Schiff, however. He states in the introduction that he shut himself off from earlier efforts: "My source material was the novel itself". Yet there are places where Schiff's screenplay follows Kubrick's film and/or Nabokov's screenplay but conflicts with the novel. For instance, Humbert's reason for coming to the US in the novel is that his deceased uncle's will promised him a sizeable monthly stipend if he would come to the US and pretend to take an interest in the business. Mark Twain (and Jimmy Buffett) would say Humbert was a "Remittance Man", a black sheep paid to go away and stop embarrassing the family. In Nabokov's screenplay and Kubrick's film Humbert is a writer and distinguished scholar who comes to the US to lecture at Beardsley College. Schiff's screenplay (and Lyne's film) follow the earlier film and screenplay, not the novel. More grievously, he says Dominique Swain "...wasn't quite beautiful". Now maybe I'm one of those "tortured artists" who know a nymphet when they see one and Schiff isn't. But there are 50-odd screenshots within Lyne's film in which Dominique Swain appears not only as beautiful but as heart-stoppingly so. Schiff's description might fit DS as she appeared in her later films, but to me part of the mystique of the Lyne film is that he cast Dominique Swain as Lolita while Swain was in her all-too-brief "nymphet stage", then she moved on like a Nabokov butterfly, fortunately leaving behind for us her magnificent portrayal of Lolita, recorded for the ages. As Humbert (or is it Nabokov?) says in finality, "And this is the only immortality you and I may share, my Lolita". And so it is!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Should Read: The Shooting Script of the Film. By Steven Daedalus

There's a very brief entry by Jeremy Irons, a slightly longer one by Lyne that deals with the travails of the film following its release after everyone's heroic effort to get it made, then Peter Schiff's longer introduction that covers much of the same ground in greater detail. The bulk of the book is made up of the shooting script -- the scenes as they were written and filmed -- before the actual editing and trimming, plus a lot of real estate devoted to screen shots from the film. I said Schiff's essay gives us greater detail but "greater" is such a relative term. It's clear that getting the production funded, filmed, and marketed was a nightmare, but I'd have liked to know more about some of the pre-production decisions regarding the movie as movie -- not as so much of the public (and professionals) saw it, a rabble-rousing endorsement of pedophilia. Schiff tells us that Irons was the obvious choice for Humbert. Fine, but why? And what made Dominique Swain stand out from the thousands of other young girls whose mothers would willingly have them debauched on screen? Well -- we don't find out. The rest of the book is in many ways more interesting than the introductory sections. It follows pretty closely the dialog and events we see in the finished product but the excisions are fascinating in themselves. What a country of blue noses we are. The scene in which HH has his first orgasm with Lolita on the Sunday living room couch is gone, for instance. Too much forbidden sex, although Lolita may be unaware of what happens. But the climactic killing of Quilty, with all its agony and its oceans of gore, is intact. It's okay to shoot a man in cold blood, to put innumerable holes through his naked body, and to show it realistically -- but don't touch a fourteen-year-old knee. The script presented here follows the novel far more closely than Kubrick's did. In some ways it's a weakness because a lot of what goes on in the novel isn't spelled out in the dialog, only in HH's descriptions of it, as Schiff points out. This requires that some original dialog be added, and the writers (who included at one point David Mamet) do a pretty good job of it. It's tough enough to squeeze a classic novel into the shape of a movie. Joseph Strick tried it with "Ulysses" and it was a dismal failure. Lyne's "Lolita" more closely approaches success. I was reminded of another attempt to shape a long and complex novel into a film: "The Caine Mutiny." In the book, Captain Queeg's paranoia gradually reveals itself in a series of related incidents of enough intricacy that they simply couldn't be depicted in the movie. So, early on, during the first wardroom meeting, Queeg's neurotic behavior is adumbrated in a single statement. He's describing his experiences in the Atlantic and adds: "The way those subs ganged up on us, I thought they had it in for me personally." To me, that represents skillful screen writing and the script of "Lolita" shows it in abundance. Yet, by sticking to the events of the novel as closely as it does, the script misses something. It misses the same thing that Strick's version of "Ulysses" did. "Lolita" is, at base, a serious and even tragic story, but not as HH tells it. A few earnest passages aside, it's hilarious. But the script can't capture most of the comic turns taken by Nabokov's prose. What little humor there is, is confined to a few brief moments -- the mix-ups over HH's name, for instance. At the Beardsley School for Girls the headmistress addresses him as "Professor Himmler." And at the Enchanted Hunters, he coldly informs the clerk that "the name is not Humbug but Herbert -- I mean Humbert." And, man, does this script need some of the novel's humor. Kubrick at least had a non-canonical Peter Sellers in five different roles. (Some were more successful than others.) And it had an African-American hotel porter wrestling with a fold-up cot that insisted on reverting to its more compact form. Lyne's movie has none of Sellers' outrageous

hamminess and no slapstick. And the absence of that ludic element turns the script into a somewhat gloomy love story. The moody musical score helps keep it there. So does the photography which is too often dark, foggy, and rainy, whereas Nabokov's novel was full of sunshine, beaches, vast furrowed plains, and craggy mountains. Okay. At its base, it's a tragedy. We know that. But why remove the one element that makes it more than that? I guess, in a way, it can't be helped. HH was pretty snotty, and contemptuous of almost everyone he met, but that was all internally edited by him. Outwardly he was polite and a little distant in a proper aristocratic way. His demeanor was phony but deliberately so, and the irony of the contrast between his amused contempt and his interactional delicacy is gone. I suppose this is about as good as it can get. There is always so much more to a work of fiction than what we see on the screen, at least as far as a classic work like "Lolita" is concerned. Hitchcock's movie of "Psycho" was actually an improvement over Robert Bloch's unimaginative story. No comment on those who find the novel or either film version offensive because the story is an endorsement of pedophilia, or because it encourages statutory rape or something. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Absolutely fantastic book! By Xtina Fan I love this version of Lolita, so when I saw there was a book that contained the screenplay, I was thrilled! It was so much fun reading through the script and seeing what was improvised by the actors and what scenes ended up being cut out of the film. The introductions by Jeremy Irons and Adrian Lyne were a little short, but it was great to read what they had to say about the film. I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in Lolita the book or film, or anyone who's just looking to read a great screenplay.

Foreword by Jeremy Irons, preface by Adrian Lyne. Based on the novel by Vladimir Nabokov, Schiff tells the astounding story behind the most controversial movie of our time. 75 movie stills. "Like Nabokov's novel, it is an eloquent tragedy laced with wit and a serious, disturbing work of art..." The New York Times