

"Anna Ascends"

Paramount—Five Reels

(Reviewed by Laurence Reid)

ALICE BRADY has in "Anna Ascends," a screen version of the stage play which she appeared in two seasons ago. There was nothing conspicuous about the original to make a fuss over, and the film adaptation will not be catalogued as a masterpiece. It simply tells a story of an immigrant girl who is ambitious enough to rise from her lowly environment. The author has made her a Syrian instead of an Italian or a Russian. Otherwise it is the same character study which is interwoven with considerable hokum melodrama and the customary romance. Alice Brady colors it because she is particularly skillful in portraying such roles.

It appears to us that it could have been made more plausible so that the human note might be better emphasized. It is, indeed, "picturey" to see this heroine rise so rapidly until she is accepted in the best society. The early reels are much more interesting since they reveal considerable local color and the action appears somewhat realistic. It is reasonable to believe that this dynamic young immigrant would experience a love affair with a native New Yorker and attempt, through his influence over her, to expose her employer as a crook. But once she brandishes a knife and uses it upon one of her employer's associates, things begin to happen too quickly. Thinking she has killed the smuggler of jewels, she runs away and a title or two and an unimportant scene informs us that she is on the high road to success.

Really the best part of the picture is the development of the romance and this isn't extremely vital. The lovers are separated and the melodrama is introduced. Meanwhile the heroine writes a book and it makes such an impression that the hero's father, a newspaper publisher, assigns him to interview the author and sign her up for a series of articles. So the romance comes into its own again. The crooks are exposed and all ends happily. The director's atmosphere is first rate and he has done good work with a story which is mostly colorless aside from its characterization. Really the figures are much more interesting than the plot—and the star is given fine support by David Powell and Edward Durand who are well cast. Robert Ellis makes the most of the weak role of the hero, while Charles Gerrard plays one of the villains with his customary finesse and poise. "Anna Ascends" carries a good production.

The Cast

Anna Ayyob.....	Alice Brady
Howard Fisk.....	Robert Ellis
The Baron.....	David Powell
Countess Rostoff.....	Nita Naldi
Count Rostoff.....	Charles Gerrard
Siad Coury.....	Edward Durand
Bessie Fisk.....	Florence Dixon
Miss Fisk.....	Grace Griswald
Mr. Fisk.....	Frederick Burton

By Harry Chapman Ford. Scenario by Margaret Turnbull. Directed by Victor Fleming. Photographed by Gilbert Warrenton. Produced by Famous Players.

The Story—Syrian immigrant girl, employed in a coffee house, has ambitions to rise in the world. She gets mixed up with romance, diamond smugglers and the law and finally has a shadow cast upon her life in the thought that she has killed a man. She writes a book which creates a great sensation and romance comes back into her life. In the end she brings about the capture of the crooks and marries the man of her heart.

Classification—Melodrama carrying a character study with plenty of romance and adventure thrown in for good measure.

Production Highlights—The first rate detail and atmosphere. The humor of the early romantic scenes. The good character work of Charles Gerrard, Robert Ellis, David Powell, Edward Durand and Alice Brady.

Exploitation Angles—Would advise featuring it as adaptation of star's stage play. Also suggests tie-up with newspapers.