

FICTIONAL FILM ADAPTATION

“Flowering Judas” (1930)

Katherine Anne Porter

(1890-1980)

from *Follywood* (2005)

Her thoughts again turned to Ryan. She had not been able to attract him with an idea for a long time and she had begun to feel they would never work together again, though he kept assuring her it was just a matter of agreeing on a scenario. After he returned from Venice, he surprised her by asking to see the adaptation she had been working on. He liked it well enough to wangle a small budget from the studio for *Flowering Judas*, a short story by Katherine Anne Porter about an idealistic American girl, a teacher who goes to Mexico and gets involved in a Communist revolution. They sat in the sunken living room studying copies of her script, while Boffo slept near them on the hearth, sighing in a dream of his own. Sarah began to feel hopeful that, finally, Ryan was ready to be faithful.

“She has to sleep with the leader,” she explained. “In order to free the ten rebels in prison.”

“So sometimes it can be okay to sleep with somebody when you don’t want to. For a good cause.”

“Nice try, Ryan.”

He grinned through a whorl of his cigar smoke, “I’m just looking for the meaning in this.”

“She’s like some women I know in the Guild. The rebel leader plays his guitar and croons to her seductively, but he’s corrupt and she’s too proud to make a sacrifice.”

“And she won’t inform on him.”

“No, she’d be too afraid to do that. And she won’t do something that embarrasses her.”

He came over and sat down beside her.

“Just give me a love scene.” He began to strum an imaginary guitar, leering and crooning to her seductively. “With a handsome rebel who looks like Ring Lardner, Jr. The one who overdoses in prison after she brings him the drugs.”

“You directors are so corrupt!”

“A quickie. That’s all I ask.”

She pushed him away.

“We’ll cast—“ he laughed and recovered his balance. “We’ll cast a heavysset guy with a thick mustache as the Communist leader. Joe Stalin in a sombrero.”

They cast Judy Garland as the girl, to exploit her identification with the popular Utopian dream of Oz and with drug overdoses.

Michael Hollister  
from Chapter 20  
*Follywood* (2005) 297-8