



There aren't words adequate enough to describe how adorable Baxter is, nor words appropriate enough for what a jerk Sheldrake is.

The girl in the love triangle is Fran Kubelik (Shirley MacLaine), a meek, fouled up (her words) elevator operator in the same building. She's also single. Baxter has a crush on her, but she's having an affair with Sheldrake on the side — his latest "ring-a-ding-ding" girl. She's actually trying to call it off with him, though rather unsuccessfully. Baxter knows none of this, or at least not that it's Sheldrake she's seeing.

In the meantime, several disreputable guys are trying to crawl up the office's corporate ladder. Philanderers themselves, they use Baxter's apartment for their hookups. Baxter provides a key that floats around the office, keeping a schedule of the nightly shenanigans, which lead his neighbors to think that he's quite a busy guy — playboy-wise. In the hopes of also making his

own climb to an executive floor, he reluctantly lets Sheldrake in on the "key club." Oops.

A few of these actors also went on to more genial roles — Ray Walston ("My Favorite Martian") and David White (Larry Tate on "Bewitched").

"The Apartment" is a snapshot of office life in the 1950s and 1960s: Rows of desks topped with adding machines, ink blotters, in-boxes and Rolodexes; entire floors bordered by lengthy hat shelves and coat racks; errand boys delivering messages; and elevator girls waiting to take you up or down. And then there's the office Christmas party, where thousands of employees from dozens of floors gather in almost

barbarous merriment with free-flowing everything. Does anyone party like that anymore?

Santa even makes an appearance. He's in a bar, soused after finishing his Christmas Eve duties, but — he's there.

With topics of infidelity, sexual harassment and (mild spoiler alert) an attempted suicide, controversy surrounded the movie's release. However, the film was, and remains, a popular success — mostly because none of those things win out in the end. Out of 10 nominations at the 1960 Academy Awards, "The Apartment" won five, including Best Picture and Best Director to Billy Wilder. Lemmon and MacLaine also won Golden Globe awards.

Interested? Here are some

'THE APARTMENT'

The 1960 film "The Apartment" was nominated for 10 Academy Awards in 1961.

It won:

- Best Picture
- Best Director (Billy Wilder)
- Best Writing, Story and Screenplay (Billy Wilder and I.A.L. Diamond)
- Best Art Direction-Set Decoration, Black-and-White (Alexandre Trauner, Edward G. Boyle)
- Best Film Editing (Daniel Mandell)

The other nominations were:

- Best Actor in a Leading Role (Jack Lemmon)
- Best Actress in a Leading Role (Shirley MacLaine)
- Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Jack Kruschen)
- Best Cinematography, Black-and-White (Joseph LaShelle)
- Best Sound (Gordon Sawyer)

food suggestions from the movie to prepare in advance, ambiance-wise: cheese crackers, Chinese food (specifically, sweet-and sour shrimp) and spaghetti (tennis racket optional). Drinks: daiquiris, martinis, champagne and Tom and Jerry, a one-time popular Christmas cocktail. Like fruitcake? It's there too.

Make it a party and gather some friends for a game of gin rummy during, before or after the movie.

And here are a couple other movies to consider: "Grand Hotel" and "The Music Man." Both have noteworthy mentions in "The Apartment."

One last tip from this devoted fan: Start the movie right at 10 p.m. so that the New Year's Eve scene near the end will happen right at midnight. And have a party hat and horn handy — celebration-wise.

(Want to know what the "wise" is all about? Watch the movie and find out!)

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