

## CRUEL BEING KIND

My imagined addition to the *Godfather* series is meant to be upsetting. You'll never have to see that death of Kay, but how many times have you had to sit through similar movie spectacles—or worse? We saw Evelyn Mulwray's eye shot out at the end of *Chinatown* (1974). I wanted you to shudder, but that may betray my age. For I recollect a time when shuddering hadn't really started yet. People were just childishly afraid at the movies; they went there with some cozy danger in mind. You could watch Clouzot's *Diabolique* (1955) as a teenager, and wonder whether you were going to have a heart attack, just like the wife in the film. *Psycho* then was five years ahead. But our ancestors said they got their shivers from grave softies like Bela Lugosi in *Dracula* or Boris Karloff in *Frankenstein*, and it's unkind to belittle those fears. The history of being afraid is a current in which we are all