

*Touchez Pas au Grisbi* – comments

*Touchez Pas au Grisbi* is an excellent movie. Max is the ultimate *film noir* character. He is strong, resourceful, decisive, and smart. Also, and this is what sets him apart from his American counterparts, he is honorable and worthy of respect. His priorities are in order. He is in control of his emotions. He has an arch rival, Angelo, who shares many of Max's characteristics, but unlike Max has poor judgment. Max is exactly the wrong person to try to shake down. Also, Max won't abandon a friend, no matter how thoughtlessly the friend may act. Max values loyalty. Jean Gabin's performance is both outstanding and uncanny, the former because of its technical brilliance, i.e., subtle, controlled, commanding, and the latter because of its striking resemblance to the style of acting associated with Robert De Niro, another great actor who has played similar roles. Gabin predates the De Niro style by three decades. As for the cast in general, their acting is so skillful that they could be mistaken for actual gangsters. There are no caricatures and nobody is playing up to the camera. Regarding the cinematography, this movie beautifully captures a hidden side of Paris, the side that tourists don't visit. This is Paris at night; in the side streets, dimly lit, yet exciting and intimate. This is Max's kingdom, the place where you will find him having dinner, making small talk, and enjoying life – until the next job.