

A BRAND NEW 4K RESTORATION

EALING STUDIOS PRESENT VALERIE HOBSON DENNIS PRICE JUAN GREENWOOD ALEC GUINNESS "KIND HEARTS & CURONETS" WITH AUDREY FILDES MILES MALLESUN CLIVE MURTUN SCREENPLAY BY ROBERT HAMER AND JOHN DIGHTON BASED ON THE NOVEL BY ROY HORNIMAN DIRECTOR OF PHOOTOGRAPHY DOUGLAS SLOCOMBE EDITED BY PETER TANNER PRODUCED BY MICHAEL BALCON AND MICHAEL RELPH DIRECTED BY ROBERT HAMER

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UK RELEASE DATES

June 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the original UK release of *Kind Hearts & Coronets*, the jewel in Ealing Studios' crown, and arguably one of the finest British films ever made. To celebrate this anniversary STUDIOCANAL are re-releasing the film in cinemas and then in a stunning Collector's Edition as part of their Vintage Classics Collection.

UK Theatrical release - June 7th 2019

Brand new 3 disc Collector's Edition and other formats - June 24th 2019

https://www.facebook.com/vintageclassicsfilm



SYNOPSIS

In the condemned cell, the tenth Duke of Chalfont – formerly Louis Mazzini - is writing the memoir that will explain his path to the gallows. It concerns the vow he made to avenge the humiliation of his mother, a minor member of the aristocratic D'Ascoyne family, excommunicated after her scandalous elopement with an Italian opera singer. It also describes his romantic obsession with Sibella, a childhood friend with whose family he lodges after the death of his mother. When the D'Ascoynes deny his mother's wish to be buried in the family tomb, Louis vows to kill everyone between him and the Chalfont dukedom.

His first victim is the arrogant young Ascoyne D'Ascoyne, a banker's son, whom he drowns by propelling his punt over a weir at Maidenhead. (Ascoyne's lover also perishes.) The death creates an opening at the bank, which Louis fills by sending a cleverly worded letter of condolence to his victim's father. He then befriends young Henry D'Ascoyne, and kills him by putting petrol in the paraffin lamp of his dark room – to which Henry retires to drink, unobserved by his wife, Edith.

Louis accompanies the widow to the funeral, at which he encounters the remaining D'Ascoynes on his hitlist. The campaign continues. He spikes Reverend Lord Henry D'Ascoyne's port with poison. He shoots down the suffragist Lady Agatha D'Ascoyne as she passes over Berkeley Square, dropping leaflets from a hot-air balloon. He kills General Lord Rufus D'Ascoyne with a booby-trapped jar of caviar. Admiral Lord Horatio D'Ascoyne dies, of his own accord, in a maritime accident. Meanwhile, Louis' relationship with Edith grows closer – and he begins an adulterous affair with Sibella, who has now married a stolid but apparently prosperous husband named Lionel.



SYNOPSIS

One night Lionel comes to Louis' lodgings to beg for financial help. Louis refuses. Later, Sibella tries to blackmail him, telling her lover that Lionel has discovered their affair. But Louis calls her bluff and tells her that he is already engaged to Edith.

He then commits his next murder – shooting the Duke of Chalfont before he can remarry and produce and heir. On hearing the news, Louis' final obstacle, Lord Ascoyne D'Ascoyne, dies of shock.

Louis is arrested for murder. Much to his surprise, he finds himself on trial for killing Lionel, who has been found dead. Opting to abide by the judgement of his peers, Louis goes on trial at the House of Lords, where Sibella's evidence condemns him to death. But after Edith has married him in prison, Sibella returns and appears to suggest a murderous deal. Lionel's suicide note might be found; Edith might die; Sibella might then become the next Duchess. Louis seems to accept, and, at the last moment, the suicide note appears that secures his pardon.

Sibella and Edith are waiting for him at the prison gates. But his joy is only temporary. The manuscript, telling the unvarnished truth, remains on the desk in the condemned cell.





THE 4K RESTORATION

For the new 2019 restoration of *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, the 35mm nitrate original negative was scanned in 4K resolution at 16bit by the BFI archive.

The resulting files were sent to Silver Salt Restoration, for restoration and colour grading. Extensive manual correction was carried out on a frame by frame basis to fix large dirt debris, warping, tears, scuffs and scratches. It was colour corrected by Senior Colourist, Steve Bearman.

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ROBERT HAMER (Writer/Director)

ROBERT HAMER (1911-1963) was one of the great squandered talents of British cinema. Squandered by the industry and himself. At school in Fleetwood, Lancashire, he won a scholarship to study at Corpus Christi, Cambridge, but was sent down for a homosexual indiscretion. Work in the editing room at Gaumont-British studios led to a job at the GPO film unit under Alberto Cavalcanti – who took him to Ealing studios to edit the George Formby vehicle *Turned Out Nice Again* (1941).

His first credit as director was the strange Freudian psychodrama about a haunted mirror that formed one of the stories in the Ealing portmanteau film *Dead of Night* (1945). Forbidden passion often burned in his work. In *Pink String and Sealing Wax* (1946), Gordon Jackson played a naïve young Brightonian caught up in blackmail and murder. *It Always Rains on Sunday* (1947), Googie Withers played Rose Sandigate, a housewife visited unexpectedly by an old flame — whom she hides in a bedroom while her family goes about their daily business. The deliciously poisonous *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949) was a triumph and a burden. Michael Balcon, head of Ealing, was wary of its darkness and sensuality.

Outside Ealing, Hamer made the bleak period melodrama *The Spider and the Fly* (1950), the hunted-man drama *The Long Memory* (1952) and *Father Brown* (1954), a somewhat incoherent comedy thriller with Alec Guinness as the GK Chesterton's clerical detective. The same problems were worse in *The Scapegoat* (1958), which also starred Guinness. In his last years, Hamer became lost in an alcoholism that had him removed from the set of his last film, *School for Scoundrels* (1960), and, at its worst, caused him to hallucinate being followed home from the studio by a pair of malicious lobsters.





DENNIS PRICE (Louis)

DENNIS PRICE (1915-1973) spent much of his career in dressing gowns and smoking jackets, lips slightly pursed, quietly amused at the shortcomings of those around him. Powell and Pressburger discovered him, casting him as sensitive young soldier in A Canterbury Tale (1944), but Gainsborough studios put him under contract and cultivated his dissolute, sadistic side, hoping that he might prove a good replacement for James Mason. In Caravan (1946), he was a villainous romantic rival to Stewart Granger. In Jassy (1947), he lost his family seat in a game of dice and put a bullet through his skull. In Dear Murderer (1947) he has a deliciously nasty scene in which a vengeful husband (Eric Portman) tricks him into writing a letter that will make his murder look like suicide using gas. He complained that Gainsborough killed him too often.

The scene has a strange resonance with Price's own life. In the early fifties his career began to falter. The box office failure of *The Bad Lord Byron* (1949) depressed him: he felt miscast and believed that the role should have gone to Eric Portman. In 1950, his marriage collapsed. His drinking became a problem. In 1954, he made a suicide attempt using the same method depicted in *Dear Murderer*. His landlady discovered him just in time. When he came round he was reported to have said, "What glory, Price?" But the publicity produced an unexpected stimulus to his career.

For the next two decades he accumulated an immense number of credits. Television made him Jeeves to Ian Carmichael's Bertie in *The World of Wooster* (1965-7), but the film kept him in supporting roles. He played a man blackmailed for his homosexuality in *Victim* (1961), an eccentric Soho travel agent in *Horror Hospital* (1973); a theatre critic felled by a spear in *Theatre of Blood* (1973). He was declared bankrupt in 1967, attributing his financial problems to "extravagant living and most inadequate gambling". He died on the island of Sark in 1973, aged 58.





JOAN GREENWOOD (Sibella)

JOAN GREENWOOD (1921-1987) was an actress whose beguilingly strange and musical voice was heard in British culture for half a century – from her early uniform role, operating an anti-aircraft gun in *The Gentle Sex* (1943), to her turn as feather-clad landlady to Dawn French, Jennifer Saunders, Ruby Wax and Tracey Ullman in the ITV sit-com *Girls on Top* (1985-6). The daughter of a painter, she trained at RADA and was on stage from 1938.

Hollywood imported her to bring class and intelligence to *Moonfleet* (1955), but Ealing provided her with some of her best roles. She was cool and catlike as the scheming Sibella in *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949), warmer as a quizzical islander in *Whisky Galore!* (1949), unmeltable and rational opposite Alec Guinness in *The Man in the White Suit* (1951). She appeared opposite Guinness again in Hamer's *Father Brown* (1954). She was a fine Gwendolen in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1952): a slice of cake was never received with such well-calibrated horror. Period manners suited her.

She seduced Albert Finney in Tony Richardson's *Tom Jones* (1963), and rewarded him for his efforts. Her final screen role was in Christine Edzard's immense adaptation of Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1987) as the matriarch whose Calvinist severity is the darkness form which the hero must liberate himself. Alec Guinness also appeared, but they had no scenes together.

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ALEC GUINNESS (The D'Ascoynes)

ALEC GUINNESS (1914-2000) was a prolific and elusive star. The illegitimate son of a barmaid named Agnes de Cuffe - from whom he dissociated himself at the age of 18 - his birth certificate bore a blank space where the name of his father should have been. (With characteristic drollery, he called his memoirs *My Name Escapes Me.*) Knowing his predilection for disguise, directors dressed him up in wigs, skins, epaulettes, corsets, cassocks, turbans and ghutra: he was haunted by six ancestral versions of himself in *Barnacle Bill* (1957), slaughtered several times over in *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949), attempted to murder his own double in *The Scapegoat* (1959) and everybody else in *Murder by Death* (1976).

He was loyal to his directors. For Ronald Neame, for instance, he played a self-made hero in *The Card* (1952), an unruly artist in *The Horse's Mouth* (1958) and in *Tunes of Glory* (1960), a scarlet-bristled Major driven to suicide by a growing cognisance of his own brutality. He frequently acted across cultural boundaries: he is a compellingly monstrous Fagin in *Oliver Twist* (1948), quietly imperious as Prince Feisal in *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), preposterous as Professor Godbole in *A Passage to India* (1984) and knowingly foolish in *The Comedians* (1967), as a bogus Major who drags up as a Haitian washerwoman in order to escape the Ton Ton Macoute.

His role as Obi Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars* (1977) brought him attention that he did not welcome: he preferred flawed and hollow mortals, such as his Oscar-winning Lieutenant Colonel Nicholson in *Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), or his definitive George Smiley in the John Le Carre TV adaptations, *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (1979) and *Smiley's People* (1982).

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VALERIE HOBSON (Edith)

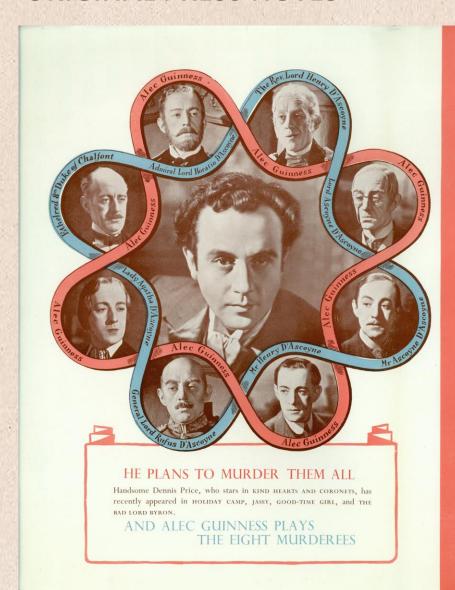
VALERIE HOBSON (1917-1998) retired from acting at the age of 37, calculating that her starring role in the first London production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* (opposite Herbert Lom) would be a triumphant final line to her career. There was a symmetry to her decision: her first performance, at the age of 15, came after Oscar Hammerstein II spotted her lunching at Claridge's with her mother.

Her first film experience was in British quota quickies — which proved to be an unexpected route to a contract with Universal. In Hollywood at the age of eighteen, her best roles were in horror pictures. She was the real title character in James Whale's *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), and recoiled from a hairy Henry Hull in Werewolf of London (1935). Universal banked her high-decibel screams in their sound archive, but did not renew her contract. She returned to Britain for work with Alexander Korda, saving Sabu from death in *The Drum* (1938) and going undercover in an aircraft factory in *Q Planes* (1939). During the war she declined work in America for two Powell and Pressburger espionage dramas that paired her with the German émigré star Conrad Veidt. She spied for Germany in *The Spy in Black* (1939) and for Britain in *Contraband* (1940). In the postwar period Alec Guinness took Veidt's place — she shared the bill with him as the glaciated Estella in *Great Expectations* (1946), the cheerlessly virtuous Edith in *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949) and the energetic Countess of Chell in *The Card* (1952).

In October 1953 she gave the first of 926 performances as Anna in *The King and I*. Marriage, the following year, to the Conservative MP John Profumo, ensured that the last act of her life was not free of drama. She remained loyal to him through the scandal that acquired his name, until her death.

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ORIGINAL PRESS NOTES



"It's so difficult to make a neat job of killing people with whom one is not on friendly terms."

Louis D'Ascoyne Mazzini, Duke of Chalfont (Dennis Price) is in prison. In the morning he is to be executed. He passes the night writing his memoirs, which tell the story of his murderous determination to secure adukedom.

His mother (Audrey Fildes), daughter of the Duke of Chalfont, was cut off by her family when she married an Italian singer. He died soon after the birth of Louis, who grows up to hate the family who leave his mother in such poverty. He draws up a family tree and decides to kill the eight relatives who stand between himself and the title.

VICTIM NO. ONE The first victim is Ascoyne D'Ascoyne (Alec Guinness). Louis unmoors his punt, and the young man is swept to double over a punit.

VICTIM NO. TWO Henry D'Ascoyne (Alec Guinness) is next on the list. Petrol in his dark room lamp ends this young photographer's life. Louis' early love, Sibella (Joan Greenwood) has just married a rival, so he begins to pursue Edith (Valerie Hobson) Henry's beautiful widow.

VICTIM NO. THREE Louis, posing as a Colonial bishop, politely poisons the Rev. Lord Henry D'Ascoyne (Alec Guinness).

VICTIM NO. FOUR Next comes Lady Agatha D'Ascoyne, a suffragette.

She is dropping leaflets from a balloon when Louis shoots an arrow in
the air—and Lady Agatha plunges to death in Berkeley Square.

VICTIM NO. FIVE Admiral Horatio D'Ascoyne obligingly kills himself by going down with his ship.

VICTIM NO. SIX General Lord Rufus D'Ascoyne has always loved the cannon's roar, so Louis sends him a pot of explosive caviare.

VICTIM NO. SEVEN Lord Ascoyne D'Ascoyne conveniently dies of a stroke.

VICTIM NO. EIGHT Louis lures the last victim, the Duke, into a man trap on his estate and shoots him.

And in the end, Louis is condemned to death for a murder he has not committed—that of Sibella's husband: He is reprieved at the last minute, but he has made a fatal mistake—in the excitement, he has left his memoirs behind in the condemned cell.

STUDIOCANAL

ORIGINAL PRESS NOTES



These Stars spell S.U.C.C.E.S.S

A villain with a difference - DENNIS PRICE

Dennis Price regards his role in KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS as the best he has ever played. In it, he plans to kill eight relatives, in order to secure a title—and he does murder six of them with cynical and light-hearted skill.

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The luck of the Irish - VALERIE HOBSON

In KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS, Valerie Hobson plays the part of Edith, lovely widow of one of title-hunting Louis Mazzini's first victims.

Valerie has always had the luck of the Irish. At the age of fifteen she took the part of an actress whom she was understudying. This led to her first film chance, and she appeared in BADGER'S GREEN, produced by Anthony Havelock Allen.

neroune in a number of "cnillers".

On her return to England, she chanced to meet Tony Havelock Allen once again. They married—and he gave her a comedy part in THIS MAN IS NEWS.

She was a great success, and since then she never looked back for a moment.

At last she's a vixen-JOAN GREENWOOD

They say that every "nice girl" wants to be a bad girl and this is true of Juan Greenwood. She has been a nice girl in all her films; and now at last in KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS, she gets the chance to play a pretty, scheming vixen.

Juan was born in Chelvaz in 1311, her father being a well-known painter. She often posed for famous artists, and Epstein did a bust of her.

She enjoyed a very early stage success playing child roles (including Peter Pan) in the West End. From this she went to repertory, returning to London as an adult acress.

After playing a number of film supporting parts, Joan starred in THE OCTOBER MAN, THE WHITE UNICORN, SARABAND FOR DEAD LOVERS and THE BAD LORD BYRON.

Then came a chance she had been waiting for—to play a role in comedy—WHISKY GALORE. Joan lives with her mother in a Chelsea studio. Her recreations are painting, reading, boating and cooking, and she has a passion for the circus.

A man with a million faces—ALEC GUINNESS

What does it feel like to be eight separate people simultaneously? Alec Guinness should be able to answer this question, because he played eight separate roles (plus a brief appearance in a flash-back sequence for lack to is KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS—a unique achievement. At one and the same time, he is a young gallant, an ardent photographer, an elderly clergyman, a stupid admiral, a blimpish general, a banker, a duke, an ancestor—and a militant stuffagette.

Also Gainnes started bis career as an advertising copywriter, Gising this up, he decided to become an actor. Hungry and nearly hopeless, he wandered up to the box-office of a West Enter the Started about the chance of a job. The Starge Manager happened to be standing nearly. Flatter and asked about the chance of a job. The Starge Manager happened to be standing and as a result Alse got three small parts in "Queer Cargo," After this he progressed rapidly, playing with John Gelegad and at No Old Vic.

he begins from John Georgia and a tor Out. The light for Guinness:

It has big film chances came in GREAT EXPECTATIONS and OLIVER TWIST. Then he returned to a successful season with Laurence Olivier and Ralph Richardson in the Old Vic Company.

When it was amounted that Alec was to play a ninth role in KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS, sub-editors joyfully headed the news "One over the Eight for Guinness!"

STUDIOCANAL

ORIGINAL PRESS NOTES

My Goodness-ALL GUINNESS

In the brilliant new Ealing Studios production KIND HEARTS AND CORO-NETS, Alec Guinness does the well-nigh impossible—he plays eight different roles. He acts the parts of the eight members of the D'Ascoyne family who stand between Louis Mazzini and a dukedom—and for good measure he also appears as a D'Ascoyne ancestor.

The director of the film, Robert Hamer, has emphasised that this novel piece of casting was not a stunt, Faced with the problem of finding eight quite different types, all bearing a strong family resemblance to each other, he hit on the idea of approaching one actor to play all the roles—and Alec Guinness was the obvious choice for this gargantuan task.

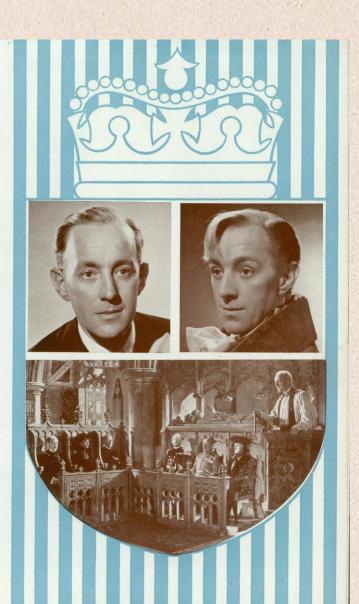
As a stage actor, Guinness makes each role he plays a completely independent creation: his Fool in "King Lear", his King in "Richard II", his Dauphin in "St. Joan", his Menenius in "Coriolanus" all seem to be the work of separate personalities, bearing no apparent relationship to one another. Yet tricks and mannerisms—the caste marks of the theatrical profession—are remarkably absent from Guinness' work.

Make-up is the least powerful weapon in his armoury, and it annoys Alec Guinness to be thought of as a latter-day Lon Chaney. There was, for instance, not so much as a false eyebrow between his bouncing Pocket and his decadent, sadistic Garcin in Jean Paul Sartre's "Vicious Circle". The important change comes from within—an act of will that seems to condition not only voice and gesture, but the very set of his malleable features.

Asked for the secret of his chameleon-like personality, Guinness can only say:
"I try to believe in my parts and live them. If I find myself imagining how I may look to the audience, I know that something has gone wrong." The method is old; the results often startlingly and refreshingly new.

In private life, Alec Guinness does not look in the least like the popular conception of a great actor. Playgoers, who lie in wait for him at the stage door, pass him by in the street. For off-stage this man of many faces is one of those persons whom Oscar Wilde described as "once seen, never remembered". With his hat worm straight on a prematurely bald head, his fresh-complexioned features set off by an almost surgically clean collar, Alec Guinness looks more like a dentist than an actor.

With Herbert Pocket, Fagin, and a host of brilliant stage characterisations behind him, Guinness tackled the ordeal of KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS with confidence. "But 1 must admit," he confessed with a smile, "that 1 thoroughly enjoyed the scene in which seven of the eight characters I play, get together for a family funeral!"



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ORIGINAL PRESS NOTES

Big names behind a big film



The Producer SIR MICHAEL BALCON

Sir Michael Balcon is a very big name in the film world. A founder-member of the British Film Producers Association he is also on the National Film Producers Council, and he was for some years the representative of British feature films on the Cincentatoranh Films Council

Sir Michael has been for some time in charge of productions at Ealing Studios, and has produced many of the pictures which have done so much to win recognition all over the world for British films.

Those pictures include THE FOREMAN WENT TO FRANCE, THE OVERLANDERS, HUE AND CRY, FRIEDA, SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC and PASSPORT TO PIMILICO.

Sir Michael became associated with Gainsburough Films, independent productions continuing until the Gainsburough Company was merged into Gaumont British in 1932. During these years Sir Michael produced such well-remembered films as THE CONSTANT NYMPH, THE GHOST TRAIN, TUDOR ROSE, JEW SUSS and THE 93 STEPS.

Many of Britain's most noted directors and stars have been given their first opportunities under his agis—directors such as Affred Hitchook, Walter Forde and Robert Hamer; stars such as Clive Brook, Ivor Novello, Jack

Sir Michael is married and has two children, the elder of whom, Jill Balcon, has embarked on a screen and stage



Associate Producer MICHAEL RELPH

AND CORONETS is a graduate from the field of art

Michael Reliph has been in the film industry since he joined the apprenticeship scheme instituted by Michael Balcon at the Shepherd's Bush Studios. Here he worked in the art department and later became art director at Teddington

He next turned his attention to the theatre. Before long, he was attracting notice in the West End by setting up an all time record by being responsible for the designing of the sets for seven London stage successes running simultaneously.

His interest in films was still strong, however, and he returned to his old tutor, Michael Balcon, who by this time had become production head at Ealing Studios. He worked as art director on a number of films, and then as associate producer on FRIEDA and SARABAND FOR DEAD LOVERS.



The Director ROBERT HAME

Quite recently Robert Hamer directed IT ALWAY: RAINS ON SUNDAY and now he directs KIND HEART: AND CORONETS, a crime story in a cynical, satirical and light-hearted vein.

economist. Three factors, however, deprived the taxpayer of his services—an inability to grasp Ricardo's Theory of Rent, the proximity of Newmarket Heath to Cambridge and the existence in Cambridge of five cinemas.

so, logically, when he came down from the university, Robert Hames went to Gaunoni-British as Aumbre-boy, in 1936 he had the good fortune to start work for Erich Pommer, Hamer came to Faling as an editor in 1940, and after three pictures Michael Balcon made him an associate producer.

His first picture in this capacity was SAN DEMETRIO LONDON. In the course of this he became a director Charles Frend was taken ill and Hamer was pitch-forke into his place.

Robert Hamer's first complete picture as a director was PINK STRING AND SEALING WAX. He collaborated on the screen play of IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY and also shares the writing credit on KIND HEARTS AND



AND THEN THERE WAS ONE Louis' seventh victim, Lord Ascoyne D'Ascoyne, conveniently dies after a stroke, leaving only the Duke himself to be liquidated.

Reviews

The new Ealing Studios Production KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS is a gay, extravagant murder-comedy. It tells the story of an embittered young man who decides to kill eight relatives in order to inherit a dukedom. One by one the victims are liquidated, and the charming murderer marries the lovely widow of one of them. In the end he is brought to trial for a murder. Which one? Well you must go and find out. Dennis Price, Valerie Hobson, and Joan Greenwood give excellent performances and Alec Guinness brilliantly plays eight parts—a unique achievement.

Can one man play eight parts simultaneously? Yes, Alec Guinness can and does, most brilliantly, in the witty new Ealing Studios production KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS. In each case he is a man (in one instance a woman) destined to be murdered by an embittered young man who craves for a title to which he has a distant claim. The film is gay, satirical and very funny, against a tense background of suspense. Dennis Price, Valerie Hobson and Joan Greenwood all give excellent performances.



EXTRAS:

Once More with Ealing – a brand new documentary featuring famous fans talking about their love for Kind Hearts and Coronets and its enduring appeal, including directors Paul King and Whit Stillman, producer Stephen Woolley and Guardian film critic Peter Bradshaw

Intro by John Landis

Audio commentary with film critic Peter Bradshaw, director Terence Davies and Matthew Guinness
Those British Faces: Dennis Price

Alternate US ending BFI's Introducing Ealing Studios Behind the Scenes stills gallery Costumes stills gallery

FORMATS:

2 disc Collector's Edition
(DVD & Blu-ray with 48-page booklet, 5 art cards and theatrical poster)
Blu-ray
DVD

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