

FILMCLUB®



Kind Hearts and Coronets



Notes

Vital Statistics

Director Robert Hamer, born Worcestershire, 1911
Released 14th June, 1950, General Film Distributors
(UK)
Running time 106 mins
Genre - Comedy Drama

Synopsis

In the early twentieth century, young Louis Mazzini vows to take revenge on his family, the D'Ascoynes, when he learns how they disinherited his mother. Working his way into their trust, Louis begins to bump off his distant relatives (all played by Alec Guinness) one by one, but complications set in when Edith D'Ascoyne, the widow of his first victim, falls in love with him.

Notes

Did you know?

- Ealing Studios is the oldest continuously working film studio in the world, and was built for the use of sound in early British films. The Ealing Comedies were a series of film comedies produced by Ealing Studios between 1947 and 1957.
- Kind Hearts and Coronets is regarded as one of the best Ealing Studios films and is listed in Time magazine's top 100 and the BFI Top 100 British Films. In 2004, Total Film named it as the 7th best ever British film.
- Alec Guinness plays eight parts in the film, but was initially only offered four. He claimed that he “read [the screenplay] on a beach in France, collapsed with laughter on the first page, and didn’t even bother to get to the end of the script. I went straight back to the hotel and sent a telegram saying, ‘Why four parts? Why not eight!?’”
- Chalfont, the family seat of the d’Ascoynes, is Leeds Castle. Far from being anywhere near the Yorkshire city, it is actually four miles east of Maidstone in Kent.

Notes

Tasks

- Consider the scene where six members of the D'Ascoynes family, all played by Alec Guinness, are seen together. In the days before CGI and advanced special effects, how do you think this was done?
- What about the action in the film? Would you expect that any stuntmen were used as stand-ins for the actors? If so, which scenes do you think they appeared in?

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