

IGNITE FILMS

CLASSICS FOR THE FUTURE

SECRET BEYOND THE DOOR

1948 / 98:00 / B/W / Drama/ Film Noir/ Psychological

Director: Fritz Lang

Starring: Joan Bennett, Michael Redgrave, Anne Revere



SYNOPSIS:

It has to do with the smell of lilacs, this secret and childhood trauma, schizophrenia, compulsion to murder, and a bizarre fascination with collecting actual rooms where murders have been committed. Not just collecting them, but adding them to the house. Michael Redgrave plays the afflicted millionaire, who has married Joan Bennet after a whirl-wind romance in Mexico. They return to the family house, where the family is strange, the house is strange and strange things start to happen. But she loves him and wants to help. Anne Revere as Redgrave's domineering older sister, Mark Dennis as the son from a previous marriage (he believes his father killed his mother), and Barbara O'Neil as his loyal secretary, crowd the house with weirdness and alienation. It all builds to a threatening climax during one of Redgrave's schizophrenic frenzies but Bennet finds the key to unlock his troubled heart. In the end he saves her from a fire that destroys the house and all its deadly rooms. Fritz Lang, as director, had a field day with all of this tension.

REVIEWS:

"It is arty, with almost surrealistic treatment in camera angles, story-telling mood and suspense, as producer-director Lang hammers over his thrill points." 29 December 1947 Variety