

THEY'RE *Contour Cut*
FOR CARESSING COMFORT

And since each line, each fold, each drape derives its fluid form from cunning Contour Cut... they're utterly lovely as well as drowsily comfortable. Your mirror will smile a flattering agreement to that.



FITS LIKE A DRESS
May Belle
SLUMBERWEAR

CREATED BY SILKNET (N.Z.) LTD.

Film Reviews by G.M.

SPEAKING CANDIDLY

SPELLBOUND

(Selznick-United Artists)



AFTER four weeks of Shakespearian splendours, *Spellbound* replaces *Henry V* in Wellington; and now, instead of Harry, we get a little touch of Hitchcock in the night. But only a feeble, diffident touch, not the bold, exciting pressure to which we are accustomed. For Hitchcock is, I think, much less at ease in the new psychological atmosphere of the cinema than in the old-fashioned world of crime melodrama where murders are solved by the comparatively simple process of deduction from clues, and not by the analysis of Freudian dream-symbols.

Spellbound is, or should be, the psychological film to end all such. It is big and impressive; it has Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck as stars and an imposing supporting cast; the script was written by Ben Hecht; Salvador Dali collaborated on the dream sequence; and the credit titles list a certain May E. Romm as special psychiatric adviser. In response to this array of talent, the public are practically trampling one another under foot to get to the box-office. And the entertainment certainly has its diverting and exciting moments—but it nevertheless remains a piece of pretentious hokey.

Thanks to the Hollywood build-up (beginning, I think, with *Lady in the Dark*) psychiatry must by now be just about the most profitable of all the professions in the U.S.A. There are, it would seem (to judge by a foreword to this new film), few things which it cannot do, few problems which will not yield a solution when the subconscious mind is probed. Yet in spite of all the learned expositions which come from the soundtrack in the course of the story as Dr. Ingrid Bergman battles for the love, the liberty, and the sanity of a patient who is on the brink of a breakdown because of a greatly-enlarged guilt-complex, I am afraid that *Spellbound* succeeds merely in giving me the impression that psychiatry itself is a science which teeters on the verge of phoniness; and that Alfred Hitchcock has here unhitched it and pushed it right over.

* * *

SO we are landed smack into an improbable tale in which the familiar Hitchcock formula of the man-hunt is complicated but not obscured by the fact that most of the action takes place in a large and expensive Psychiatric Institute, where Miss Bergman wears spectacles and pretends to herself and other members of the staff that she is pure intellect and quite uninterested in love, until Mr. Peck wanders in, posing as the new Director of the Institute but really an amnesiac obsessed by the belief that he is a murderer. Whereupon Miss Bergman promptly removes her spectacles and succumbs to her latent womanly instincts, and the two of them keep just one pace ahead of the police while she goes to work on Mr. Peck's subconscious to discover why he faints at the sight of fork-marks on the tablecloth and

stripes on a dressing-gown and wanders round at night with a razor in his hand.

* * *

THIS fantastic-rigmarole picks up considerably in interest and suspense when it is revealed that the missing Director really was murdered by somebody, and when Salvador Dali lends his surrealist aid to all the other paraphernalia of psychiatry by designing a nightmare sequence in which eyes hang suspended like barrage-balloons over a dream landscape, wheels resemble limp pancakes, and tables have human legs. But too often the camera-tricks are there simply for the sake of trickery, and only occasionally does the authentic Hitchcock technique (as in the finale of the revolver close-up) survive the pseudo-scientific hocus-pocus.

However, as the foreword rather naively assures us, "the fault is not in our stars." This would appear to exonerate Miss Bergman and Mr. Peck, who I suppose do act as well as could be expected in the circumstances. But if the fault is not in our stars, it must be in our director, or in the script-writer, or even possibly May E. Romm. Or perhaps the foreword is right after all, and it is "in ourselves." There is certainly a fault somewhere.

CONFIDENTIAL AGENT

(Warner Bros.)



ACCORDING to the advertisements, this presents "the loveliest pair in pictures"—to wit, Charles Boyer and Lauren Bacall. "Loveliest" is not an adjective which I would myself have thought of applying to either, especially since Mr. Boyer has, by his own account in this story, supposedly just gone through two years of hell in the Spanish Civil War and is consequently not looking his best, and since Miss Bacall has not, so far as I am concerned anyway, improved noticeably in appearance, demeanour, or acting ability since I had the misfortune to encounter her in *To Have and Have Not*.

Yet curiously enough, on the score of plot and treatment this film which Hitchcock did not direct resembles a Hitchcock thriller much more closely than the one above which he did. Here we have the hapless lovers, particularly the hero, pursued relentlessly from one dread adventure to another, blundering deeper and deeper into intrigue and misfortune, wanted by the police as eagerly as they are wanted by the villains who line their path. He is an agent of the Spanish Republican Government who has gone to England to buy coal for the Loyalists; she is the dissolute, cynical daughter of a mine-owning peer; the villains who shoot at him and beat him up whenever they get the chance are, of course, agents of Franco; and the London police are after him for a murder which the villains have pinned on him.

Among the various aspects of violence which the story exploits there is even the edifying spectacle of Charles Boyer deliberately slapping a dying woman in

(continued on next page)

A
Grafton
HANDKERCHIEF

is strong enough to take all this strain without breaking.

You can be sure of getting a hardwearing, long-lasting handkerchief if you buy a Grafton. The sturdy weave of a Grafton Handkerchief ensures any amount of boiling without losing its strength or its colour. Ask for Grafton Handkerchiefs everywhere.



Grafton ANTI-SHRINK

Sole Manufacturers in N.Z.

KLIPPEL BROS. (N.Z.) LTD., Box 426, AUCKLAND 17.