

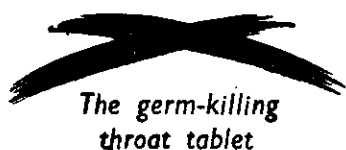
20 years ago and the problem has no doubt become even more complex in the intervening time. But I had no idea that things had reached the pass revealed in *Secret Beyond the Door*. This fantastic movie (produced by Fritz Lang, no less!) should by rights put finis to the current psychological cycle. Let the story speak for itself.

It is about a rich young woman called Celia (Joan Bennett) who meets a handsome architect called Mark (Michael Redgrave) in Mexico. They fall in love, marry without even thinking of getting themselves psychoanalysed first, and go off on their honeymoon. All might have gone reasonably well if Celia hadn't dreamed of daffodils—to dream of a ship would have meant that she had reached a safe harbour, but daffodils meant danger. So she locked her bedroom door the first evening while she brushed her hair the usual 120 times before dinner. This was a bad move, for Mark had a strange fixation about locks. They turned him all cold and introverted—so cold, in fact, that he suddenly discovered he had an appointment in New York and went off, leaving Celia to go on alone to her new home at Levender Falls.

When she arrives there she makes several startling discoveries. It turns out that Mark is a widower, with a son in his teens, that the son hates the father, that Mark's first wife is dead, and that there is a certain mystery about her death ("Mr. Mark always gave her her medicine himself.") At this stage any sensible girl would have packed up and gone home to mother, but Miss Bennett already has a clue to what is wrong with her new husband—which is a lot more than you or I can say at this stage. So off she goes to meet him at the station next morning, pausing in the entrance to pin a sprig of lilac in her buttonhole. That was another bad break—Mark kisses her, catches a whiff of lilac and retreats once more into his subconscious.

He thaws out a little next day when there is a noisy party for the newlyweds, but even this normal occurrence provides further glimpses of *recherché* abnormality. Mark is persuaded to show the guests his "collection" and what he collects are rooms. It is perhaps natural enough for an architect to take an interest in interior decoration, but a little unusual to find one collecting whole rooms in these days, when building permits are so difficult to obtain, and the kind of rooms which Mark acquires are even more unusual. Each one in his collection has been the scene of murder. He shows his guests through six of them, but politely refuses to unlock the seventh and last. "It will never be shown to anyone," he says. . . . And that, of course, is enough for Celia. She must see what's inside, and there are plenty of synthetic thrills when she does. But there is nothing real in the entire picture. "The whole thing," says Miss Bennett at one pseudo-dramatic moment, "is ridiculous." When one remembers that this trash is the work of Fritz Lang, ridiculous seems a mild word to apply to it.

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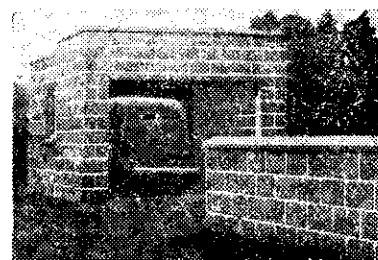
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