

FOR ADULTS ONLY

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

(Columbia)

COMING to us with a reputation for sex and sadism comparable with *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the James Jones story of U.S. army life before Pearl Harbour turns out to have rather more sadism than sex—of the kind, that is, which filmgoers are likely to find "exciting." Some of the milder forms of sadism, it's true, seemed slightly to amuse the audience the night I saw the film, but there was no doubt about their feelings after the first few reels. By the time Private Prewitt (Montgomery Clift) was ready to engage one of his tormentors in a vicious slugging match they were right there beside him getting a vicarious taste of blood, and some were clearly disappointed when Prewitt's fight to the death with the brutal "stockade" sergeant took place out of sight—a much more effective piece of cinema. I'm sure, on the other hand, there were few broken blood vessels over the much-publicised love scene in the surf—but then the big bait in a trailer often turns out that way when seen in its context.

The sadists in *From Here to Eternity* are a group of non-commissioned officers happily carrying out the orders of their company commander, Captain Holmes, to give Prewitt, a former boxer, "the treatment" because he won't join the company boxing team. The other people who matter are Alma (Donna Reed), with whom Prewitt falls in love at a "club" which soldiers attend for the company of girls; a friend, Private Maggio (Frank Sinatra); and Sergeant Warden (Burt Lancaster) and the captain's wife, Karen (Deborah Kerr), who have a love affair. All these parts are put across well, and there is some acting of surprising intensity from Miss Kerr, who smoulders unceasingly as a disappointed wife hungry for love, and Mr. Sinatra, as a wild young Italian who carries off the best of several drinking scenes before he becomes a victim of brutality in the "stockade."



Frank Sinatra

This is a film about the worst aspects of army life, and I think the story would have been truer to itself if it hadn't tried to suggest that in the end justice is done and the villains punished. The other thing that troubled me was the Pearl Harbour sequence which I thought too long for its part in the story—I was impatient to get back to the people that the film was really about. Apart from that Fred Zinnemann has selected and arranged his material with the great skill we expect of him.

Prewitt and Warden are interesting studies of men who love the army—Prewitt in a way that allows it to crucify him because with unquenchable spirit he is determined to go his own way. Warden is less easy to understand; and neither is as interesting as the two women, each seeking in a man's world something she may never find—Alma

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 26, 1954.

BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "From Here to Eternity."
FINE: "Devil in the Flesh."
MAINLY FAIR: "Dangerous Crossing."

looking for a "proper" man because "when you're proper you're safe," and Karen looking for love—the kind that Warden is willing for a time to give her—in countless brief affairs. In a first-class script by Daniel Taradash no lines are more effective and economical than some they are given to say.

DEVIL IN THE FLESH

(Paul Graetz)

IT will encourage no one to rely on my barometer when I say that *From Here to Eternity* might have got top grading this week if I hadn't seen *Devil in the Flesh*. The difference is between a very good film and a near-flawless one. *Diable au Corps*—to go back to the original French—was made about six years ago but hasn't been seen in New Zealand before (which doesn't say much for us). It is the story of the love of a boy of 16 and a married woman of 20 whose husband is away at the First World War; and if you think that sounds an unlikely subject—well, the French have a way with these things and I can only say that for Gérard Philippe and Micheline Presle acting seems a clumsy word.

Diable au Corps captures adolescence—the brash confidence, tenderness, jealousy and misery, the confused relapses from independence into dependence, the slow-dawning realisation that even requited love can be terrible as well as beautiful. It is superbly directed (by Claude Autant-Lara) and superbly photographed, and its love scenes are amongst the most tender I have seen. In fact, apart from the dubbed-in dialogue there is nothing about *Diable au Corps* for which I haven't the highest praise. The film never suggests that adultery pays, and if there are some who nevertheless condemn its sympathetic treatment of an illicit love, let me say, quite humbly, that I am sorry for them.

DANGEROUS CROSSING

(20th Century-Fox)

BILLED as the story of "Women Who Fall For Their Men Too Hard," *Dangerous Crossing* puts Jeanne Crain aboard ship for a trans-Atlantic voyage with her newly-acquired husband, who straightway disappears—after which almost everyone sets out to prove she imagined it all. Almost everyone, I said, for Michael Rennie turns up quite early as the ship's doctor. As this great big heart-throb is one of the film's two stars, you might have a sort of wild surmise at this stage that hubby is either a phony or about to be rubbed out—and you won't be wrong (you'll be right). But unless you're better at these things than I am you'll find there's still enough unexplained to keep you guessing till near fade-out.



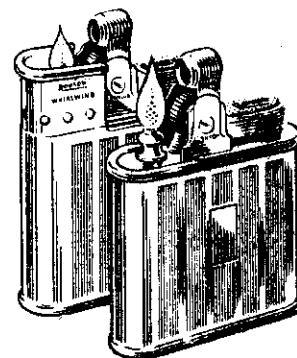
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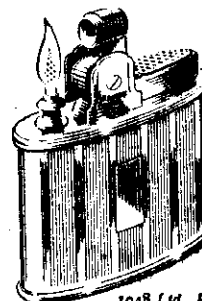
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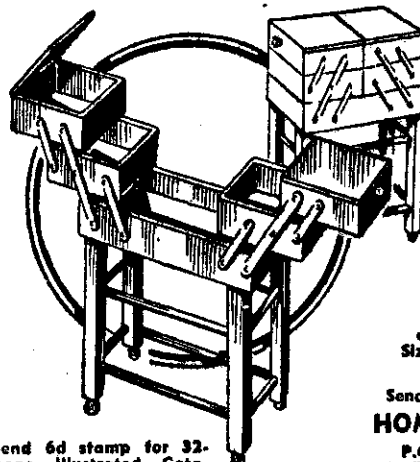
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