

The Paragon Multimedia DVD, VHS

Title: **Arsenic and Old Lace** (1944)



Disc
Library Image



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Information

Release Title: **Arsenic and Old Lace** 15th February 1945 UK (London)

AKA:

Origin: United States

Release Date: United States: 1st September 1944 (New York)

Genres: Farce, Comedy, Crime, Thriller

Disc Nos. – 1

Certification: PG

Duration: 2h 58m (118m)

Region Code:

Region: 2

Product Code:

Languages: English, German

Filming Location: Stage 19, Warner Brothers Burbank Studios - 4000

Warner Boulevard, Burbank, California, USA

Sound mix: Mono (RCA Sound System)

Colour: Black and White

Aspect Ratio: 2.37:1 (35mm)

Arsenic and Old Lace



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Frank Capra
Screenplay by	Julius J. Epstein Philip G. Epstein
Based on	<i>Arsenic and Old Lace</i> by Joseph Kesselring
Produced by	Frank Capra Jack L. Warner
Starring	Cary Grant Raymond Massey Jack Carson Priscilla Lane Peter Lorre Edward Everett Horton James Gleason Josephine Hull Jean Adair John Alexander
Cinematography	Sol Polito
Edited by	Daniel Mandell
Music by	Max Steiner
Distributed by	Warner Bros.
Release dates	September 1, 1944 (New York City) ^[1] September 23, 1944 (United States)
Running time	118 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$1.2 million ^[2]
Box office	\$4.8 million ^[2]

Storyline:– Arsenic and Old Lace

The Brewster family of Brooklyn, New York City, is descended from Mayflower settlers. Several illustrious forebears' portraits line the walls of the ancestral home. Mortimer Brewster, a theatre critic and author who has repeatedly denounced marriage as "an old-fashioned superstition", falls in love with Elaine Harper, his neighbour and a minister's daughter. On Halloween day, Mortimer and Elaine get married. Elaine goes to her father's house to share the news of her marriage with him and pack for the honeymoon, while Mortimer visits his aunts, Abby and Martha, who raised him in the old family home. Mortimer's disturbed brother, Teddy, who believes he is Theodore Roosevelt, resides with them. Each time Teddy goes upstairs, he yells "Charge!" and runs up the stairs, imitating Roosevelt's famous 1898 charge up San Juan Hill. Searching for the notes for his next book, Mortimer finds a corpse hidden in the window seat. He assumes in horror that Teddy's delusions have led him to murder. Abby and Martha cheerfully confess to murdering Mr. Hoskins and explain that they minister to lonely old bachelors by ending their "suffering". They post a "Room for Rent" sign to attract a victim, then serve a glass of elderberry wine spiked with arsenic, strychnine, and cyanide while getting acquainted with them. In addition to Mr. Hoskins, the aunts have murdered eleven other men; the bodies are buried in the cellar by Teddy, who believes they are yellow fever victims who perished in the building of the Panama Canal.

While Mortimer digests this information, his brother Jonathan arrives with his alcoholic accomplice, plastic surgeon Dr Herman Einstein. Jonathan is a serial murderer trying to escape from the police and dispose of his latest victim, Mr Spenalzo. Jonathan's face, altered by Einstein while drunk, resembles Boris Karloff's Frankenstein monster makeup. Jonathan learns his aunts' secret and proposes to bury his victim in the cellar. Abby and Martha object vehemently because their victims were "nice" gentlemen while Jonathan's victim is a stranger and a "foreigner". Jonathan also declares his intention to kill Mortimer.

Elaine is impatient to leave on their honeymoon to Niagara Falls but is concerned about Mortimer's increasingly odd behaviour as he frantically attempts to control the situation. He unsuccessfully tries to alert the bumbling police to Jonathan's presence. To draw attention away from his aunts and deprive them of their willing but uncomprehending accomplice, Mortimer tries to file paperwork to have Teddy legally committed to a mental asylum. Worrying that the genetic predisposition for mental illness resides within him, Mortimer explains to Elaine that he cannot remain married to her.

Eventually, Jonathan is arrested. Teddy is safely consigned to an institution, and his aunts insist on joining him. Einstein flees after signing the aunts' commitment papers. Upon hearing that Mortimer signed the commitment papers as next of kin, Abby and Martha are concerned they may be null and void; they inform Mortimer that he is not a Brewster after all: his mother was the family cook and his biological father was a chef on a steamship. Relieved, he kisses Elaine and whisks her off to their honeymoon. [Wiki](#)

Mortimer Brewster is a newspaperman and author known for his diatribes against marriage. We watch him being married at city hall in the opening scene. Now all that is required is a quick trip home to tell Mortimer's two maiden aunts. While trying to break the news, he finds out his aunts' hobby; killing lonely old men and burying them in the cellar. It gets worse. - John Vogel....[IMDb](#)

Personal Review: Storyline is OK, film in my opinion is a take it or leave it if there is nothing else to watch, however; that is most likely down to what we call 'American Slapstick', an alternative to a British farce, they just can't do a real 'Farce', or understand the 'irony,' sarcasm behind it, like the British. Cary Grant just does not get it and exaggerates with facial expressions that just doesn't sit right. The other actors seemed ok and did a much better job. NGW

Cast

Cary Grant as Mortimer Brewster
Priscilla Lane as Elaine Brewster
Raymond Massey as Jonathan Brewster
Jack Carson as Officer Patrick O'Hara
Edward Everett Horton as Mr. Witherspoon
Peter Lorre as Dr. Herman Einstein
James Gleason as Police Lt. Rooney
Josephine Hull as Abby Brewster

Garry Owen as taxi cab driver
John Ridgely as Officer Sanders
Vaughan Glaser as Judge Cullman
Chester Clute as Dr Gilchrist
Charles Lane as reporter
Edward McWade as Mr. Gibbs, the old man
Hank Mann as photographer at marriage license office (uncredited)
Spencer Charters as marriage license clerk (uncredited)

Jean Adair as Martha Brewster
John Alexander as "Teddy Roosevelt" Brewster
Grant Mitchell as Reverend Harper
Edward McNamara as Police Sgt. Brophy

Parents Guide

Certification

Argentina-Atp, Australia-Gcable ratingAoriginal ratingPG1990, re-rating, Brazil-14DVD rating, Canada-PGOntario, Denmark-11, Finland-K-161949(Banned)1946, France-Tous publics, Germany-122000s, re-rating, Italy-T, Japan-G, Norway-7recommended rating161949, Poland-12TV rating, South Korea-15, Spain-A, Sweden-(Banned)original rating151948, re-rating, United Kingdom-PG1990A1944, United States-Not RatedApprovedcertificate #7855, West Germany-161980s, re-rating121952, original rating

Sex & Nudity –None **Violence & Gore** - Mild, **Profanity** – None, **Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking** – Mild, **Frightening & Intense Scenes** - Mild



Publicity photo of Grant and Lane

Classic Menu



Main Menu

