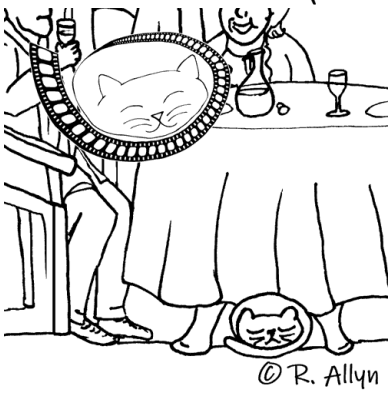
Cats on Film Pod

Transcript

Cats on Film Pod Episode 13
Arsenic and Old Lace (1944)



INTRO JINGLE

INTRO SHOW

RAY
Hi everybody! Welcome to *Cats on Film Pod*. I'm your host, Ray Ilyn, here with my co-host, Skipper.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
Thanks for joining us every Tuesday as we review cats in film. There will be spoilers.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
On today's show, we're reviewing *Arsenic and Old Lace*. It was released in 1944, so trigger warning for mid-20th century Hollywood racism.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
Not really violently so – just that everybody except a few extras are white, there's a racist music cue when we see an Asian lady, and they've got one of those jockey ornaments in front of the Brewster house. There may be some rude language that I don't recognize 'cause it's so old-fashioned. Oh, and the old aunties are definitely bigoted against "foreigners".

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
The overall joke is supposed to be that they're good, sweet ladies *except* for the murders. But they're not exactly good people to begin with. Like, the script thinks that their anti-Italian bigotry is acceptable behavior.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
Yes, they do have the sweet old lady characteristic of keeping a quiet ginger housecat, who does go unnamed.

It lives in the Brewster house in Brooklyn, with two old aunties and their nephew, Teddy. Their other nephews, Mortimer and Jonathan, stop by on Halloween. It's another crazy white people story – and like, genuinely mentally ill. When Mortimer learns that there are two corpses in the house, he rushes around trying to figure out how to protect his beloved aunties from being brought to justice.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
Yes, the cat is impressively relaxed, considering the bugle playing and murders. Maybe that's why the kitty was hiding in the corpse-filled cellar until Teddy went down there.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
Yeah, the cat's just chillin' under the dinner table while the aunties try coaxing a grumpy old white guy into drinking poisoned elderberry wine, even after he said he doesn't drink.

CLIP FROM *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE*
CAT
Meows
MORTIMER
Even the cat's in on it. Huh.

RAY

Thankfully no kitty actually got stepped on, since they could just use a yowling cat sound when the scene's blacked out. They make a point of never really showing either of the corpses. I guess the gruesomeness would've added too much realism to the screwy comedy.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
No, showing a corpse in the '40s wasn't against Code, just actual gruesome murders. Although, the Code does say filmmakers aren't supposed to lead audiences to sympathize with criminals, and that's exactly what this movie is all about.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
No, the cat doesn't have much of a personality. It's really more comedic set-dressing those three times.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
True – a cat's habit of mostly keeping to themselves, especially when strangers are in the house, is quite feline. *Hmmm,* except around the murder victims. Tabby's right in the thick of it for poisoning a man, moving a body, and burying it. But what does the cat gain from supervising the murders?

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
laughs Oh, Skipper! You are bad!

SKIPPER
moans

RAY
No, no, Skipper – not a bad cat – that's just an expression about, like, like, dark humor.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY

You're a good kitty, yes you are.

SKIPPER
purrs

RAY
Aw, I love you, Skipper.

SKIPPER
purrs

RAY
Well, what's your review of the feline representation in *Arsenic and Old Lace?*

SKIPPER
Meow, meow

RAY
Two out of four paws for *Arsenic and Old Lace*. The unnamed tabby does okay, but doesn't get to show much personality in their brief moments on screen.

END STING

RAY
Thank you for listening to *Cats on Film Pod.* Know someone who loves silly old movies? Remember to share this episode with them!

OUTRO JINGLE

END CREDITS

RAY
Cats on Film Pod is voiced and produced by Ray Ilyn, with music by The DōsMan, and additional sounds from FreeSound.org.
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Cats on Film Pod !

SKIPPER
meows