

THE GHOST AND MRS MUIR

USA (1947) 104 minutes

Director: Joseph L. Mankiewicz **Screenplay:** Philip Dunne

Cast: Gene Tierney (Lucy Muir), Rex Harrison (Capt. Daniel Gregg), George Sanders (Miles Fairley)



Screening 18 October 2017 at Swindon Arts Centre

Synopsis

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Mrs. Lucy Muir, widowed for one year, decides to move out of her controlling in-law's home in London to the English seaside with her adolescent daughter Anna. She decides to rent Gull Cottage at Whitecliff-by-the-Sea, despite it being reportedly haunted. Shortly after she arrives she is indeed haunted by the ghost of a sea captain who had previously owned the house. Because she refuses to be scared away by his presence, the two come to an understanding. However, Lucy finds in her secret relationship with Captain Gregg a comfort and blossoming love she never could have predicted....

Reviews



This film is a combination of moods and emotions. It's a drama, a comedy, fantasy, a love story, a ghost story, but most of all it's about people and how the ways of life render them at times silly and beyond belief and yet, in the end, wrap up all the loose ends and tie them neatly into a bow. It is intoxicating and we imbibe with complete and absolute abandon at the workings as they are laid before us.

What is most remarkable of all is the fact that for a love story, Lucy and Gregg never touch, never kiss and never truly reveal their love for each other until the very end, and if that is not a testament to the institution of love than nothing could ever be! Through their actions and mannerisms, we are as voyeurs watching a mating dance that may have many years to go before it culminates in a climax of incredible and everlasting endurance. It is a movie that spans the generations of movie viewers and brings them all together to see what real love is all about.

Mary Sibley, The Spinning Image

Even audiences resolutely unmoved by Patrick Swayze's undying love for Demi Moore in *Ghost* are liable to be reduced to helpless blubbing by this supernatural romance. Gene Tierney's perfect face is even more gorgeous when seen through a mist of sentimental tears, while Rex Harrison is ideal as the crusty but inwardly sensitive sea dog who lurks around her rented cottage.

An eerily evocative Bernard Herrmann score and Charles Lang's luminous photography of a Californian imitation of the English coast add to the atmosphere of magic, but the very tasteful Mankiewicz also uses masterly art direction to characterise the ghost through the warm, appealing interiors of Gull Cottage. Mounted with all the glamour 20th Century-Fox could muster, this is one of those movies that reminds you how good Hollywood used to be with faces, as Lang's gorgeous monochrome close-ups of Tierney and Harrison fill the screen. A single flaw is Natalie Wood's too-American moppet, but all the other character players are perfect.

Kim Newman, Empire

Film Facts

- The film is based on a 1945 novel by Josephine Leslie writing under the pseudonym of R. A. Dick.
- Despite being set in London and on the English coast and having mostly English actors, the film was shot entirely in California and along the central Pacific coastline.
- A T.V. series derived from the film ran from 1968-70 starring Hope Lange as Mrs. Muir and Edward Mulhare as Gregg.
- Bernard Herrmann, who later composed the famous musical score for Hitchcock's *Psycho*, considered his musical score for this film to have been his best.