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AND THEN THERE WERE NONE

(U.S., 1945) 101 minutes \$30.00

Directed and produced by René Clair - Screenplay by Dudley Nichols based on the play *Ten Little Indians* by Agatha Christie - Cinematography by Lucien Androit - Edited by Harvey Manger - Music composed by Mario Castelnovo-Tedesco - Conducted by Charles Previn - A Harry M. Popkin Production - Associate Producer, Leo C. Popkin for 20th Century-Fox Release. Players: *Barry Fitzgerald, Walter Huston, Louis Hayward, Roland Young, Jane Daprez, Mischa Auer, Sir C. Aubrey Smith, Dame Judith Anderson, Richard Haydn, Queenie Leonard, and Harry Thurston.*

Ten Little Indians went Out to Dine . . . a great mystery film with all of the best ingredients: An Agatha Christie story; ten wonderful character actors; thunder, lightning, dimming lights; a remote island; a massive Gothic house; stunning camera work; a surprise ending; and Mario Castelnovo-Tedesco's first American film score. Directed by the great René Clair, it boasts a delightfully augmented screenplay provided by the famous Dudley Nichols, which provides more warmth and humor than did the original play.

Ten strangers (at least to one another - we know who they are) find themselves invited to spend a weekend on a deserted island off the coast of England as a guest of a certain Mr. U. N. Owen (Unknown!). Here, note the masterful touches evident in the ride to the island on the launch: flirtings with sea-sickness, coupled with pipe smoke and the boatman's enormous sandwich, and close-up analysis by the camera of each character. The invisible host, known to none of the guests, leaves a recorded accusation linking each guest with a murder and ending with the terse line, "Prisoners before the bar of justice--what have you to say in your defense?"



One by one the visitors are done in until it becomes clear that one of the "visitors" is really the fanatic Mr. or Ms. Owen, the island having been searched and no one save the guests and the servants (also accused on the record) being in residence. Don't jump to the conclusion that the butler (Richard Haydn) did it, look what happens to *him* after a delightful drunk scene, or for that matter, look what happened to his wife. (Shiver).

A deadly game of cat-and-mouse moves, only no one really knows who is the cat and who is the mouse. As each visitor is killed, one of a set of ten little Indian figurines is broken until, just like the child's nursery rhyme, there are only two left. You may correctly guess *who* the two will be, but unless you've seen this fine suspense picture before, you'll never guess the murderer.

When the boatman returns the next week to pick up the guests, the two remaining tell him that all the others are in the house. "Shall I tell them we're ready?" he inquires brightly.

"Yes, *you* tell them!" (brrr)

Please don't confuse this fine version with a later version that was too badly done even to delineate here.

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