

THE SCREEN

A Child's Mind

THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE; screen play by DeWitt Bodeen; directed by Gunther V. Fritsch and Robert Wise; produced by Val Lewton for RKO Radio Pictures. At the Rialto.

rena.....	Simone Simon
Oliver Reed.....	Kent Smith
Alice Reed.....	Jane Randolph
Amy Reed.....	Ann Carter
Barbara.....	Elizabeth Russell
Miss Callahan.....	Eve March
Julia Farren.....	Julia Dean
Edward.....	Sir Lancelot
Donald.....	Joel Davis
Jois.....	Juanita Alvarez

By BOSLEY CROWTHER

In a film called "The Curse of the Cat People" you would hardly expect to find a quite wistful and appealing little story of a small girl's fantasies. Yet that is surprisingly the substance of the new tenant on the Rialto's screen and you could have knocked us over with a snowball when we saw it in that usually lurid place. True, its RKO producers have injected some horror elements and have tried to pretend that it is a sequel to their "Cat People" of a year or so back. But actually it makes a rare departure from the ordinary run of horror films and emerges as an oddly touching study of the working of a sensitive child's mind.

The story is very simple. A little girl is inclined to dream; her mind creates all sorts of fancies, which upsets her daddy no end. But when she builds up an imaginary playmate who was actually her daddy's former wife—a lady who had disturbing traffic with the "cat people" in that former film—he gets mad and punishes his daughter. Thereupon she runs away. There is a frantic chase in a snowstorm. Then everything turns out all right.

It is too bad that commercial considerations should have necessitated horror in this film, for it is best when its producers are creating the unworldly disposition of a child. And little Ann Carter in the main role of the youngster is remarkably good. Kent Smith and Jane Randolph are pleasant as her parents and Simone Simon plays the beautiful lady quite nicely, while Julia Dean is likely as a curious crone. The whole conception and construction of this picture indicates an imaginative approach. Its chief fault is that it is cursed with a flavor and some of the claptrap from that "Cat People" film.

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