

## **I Married a Witch**, October 1942, 77 minutes, B/W



Gorgeous witch Jennifer (Veronica Lake) returns 270 years after her execution to wreak havoc on a descendant of her accuser (Frederic March). Instead, after accidentally drinking a love potion intended for her victim, Jennifer falls madly in love with him and the fun begins. This film is a delightful romp that offers humor, romance, and fantasy all in one.

It was based on Thorne Smith's (Topper) last book, "The Passionate Witch", which was completed after Thorne's death by Norman Matson. The screen play was written by two Hollywood pros Robert Pirosh ("Song of the Islands", 1942) and Marc Connelly ("Captains Courageous", 1937).

"I Married a Witch" came on the heels of two of Lake's best films, "Sullivan's Travels" with Joel McCrea, and "This Gun for Hire" with Alan Ladd. It was produced and directed by prolific French filmmaker René Clair. Supporting cast includes a young Susan Hayward, then 25, as March's fiancée and perennial leprechaun Cecil Kellaway ("Wuthering Heights", 1939 and "The Luck of the Irish", 1948) who is superb as Jennifer's father. Song writer Roy Webb was nominated for the 1942 Oscar for Best Music, Scoring of a Dramatic or Comedy Picture for this film.

You have to forgive one major historical inaccuracy: Witches were hanged, not burned, in the 1600s. You should also overlook makeup artist Wally Westmore's difficulty drawing on Ms. Lake's eyebrows consistently in all scenes. A couple of times he makes her appear unintentionally surprised. One could also criticize the pairing of 22-year-old Lake with 44-year-old March, but he is supposed to be stodgy and the extra years add to the effect.

The popular TV series, "Bewitched" was loosely based on Thorne Smith's book and this movie.

Rumors of a remake have been circulating since the late 1990s when Tom Cruise bought the film rights, apparently intending for he and his then wife, Nicole Kidman, to star together. In 2003, Danny DeVito signed on as director. More recently, rumors circulated that Famke Janssen, X-Men's Jean Grey/Phoenix, was in discussions for the role of Jennifer. There hasn't been much talk of this remake lately, and it doesn't appear on the Sony Pictures active projects list.

The 1941 version is not currently available on DVD. It is offered on VHS tape through Amazon.com and has been shown on Turner Classic Movies, where it will be shown again October 14, 2006.