

La Mano Della Straniero

(aka: "The Stranger's Hand")

Italy / UK : 1953 : dir. Mario Soldati : British Lion / Independent Film Producers : 86 min
prod: John Stafford : scr: Guy Elmes & Giorgio Bassani : dir.ph.:

[Richard O'Sullivan](#) [d]

Trevor Howard; Alida Valli; Richard Basehart; Eduardo Ciannelli; Stephen Murray;
Arnoldo Foà; Giorgio Constantini; Francis L Sullivan

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω 8 ≠ M ☼	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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"Prego. Room service? Yes, ahm... What do you have in the way of **fathers**, as a matter of interest?"

Source: *The Moving Picture Boy*



Richard waits in hope of a frisk from some passing policeman Source: NFT Bulletin

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996 review:

"British espionage officer, going to Venice to meet his schoolboy son, disappears. Intriguing suspense yarn, based on a Graham Greene story, with topnotch performances. Filmed in Italy. *** "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"A British secret service officer kidnapped in Venice by communist spies is tracked down by his son who goes to school there. This entertaining and well-acted thriller was for writer Graham Greene himself the most satisfying film of his work, although the suspense does flag sometimes. The presence of Howard and Valli suggests associations with "THE THIN MAN", but such comparisons do not work to its benefit. *** "

Halliwel's Film Guide review:

"A schoolboy is due to meet his father in Venice, but the father is kidnapped by enemy agents. Rather tentative suspense thriller with a vague plot which seems to defeat an excellent cast. Scr: Guy Elmes & Giorgio Bassani, from a story by Graham Greene. Score: Nino Rota."

The Good Film and Video Guide review:

" "Graham Greene's 'THE STRANGER'S HAND' " say the credits, then claiming a screenplay by Guy Elmes and Giorgio Bassani, and you cannot blame Greene if he wanted to leave vague his contribution. The film finds Venice as cold and sinister as was Vienna in "THE THIRD MAN", but the plot is much inferior, to do with the kidnapping of a British businessman (Trevor Howard); Alida Valli is the typist egging on her American sailor boyfriend (Richard Basehart) to find him, because she has befriended the man's young son (Richard O'Sullivan). Eduardo Ciannelli and Stephen Murray support. * "

Movies on TV (1987) review:

"An exciting and tense adventure drama of intrigue acted by an excellent cast. Trevor Howard stands out. ***1/2 "

NFT bulletin - August/September '72 - review:

"This movie was apparently originated by Greene, although he does not receive a credit for the screenplay, and he was closely involved with the production. It was somewhat

neglected on its release largely, it seems, because it "was not directed by Carol Reed" and because it owed something to "**THE THIRD MAN**" (not least the cast and the foreign setting - Venice for Vienna) and "**THE FALLEN IDOL**" (in its use of a child as the mainspring of the action). As I remember it, the movie is beautifully atmospheric - Venice is superbly used - and makes good use of the neat, if conventional, story about a boy whose father is kidnapped by Russian spies."

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "A Pictorial Guide to the Talkies", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Radio Times review:

"Fascinating British mystery suspense story about a spy who disappears in Venice whilst visiting his son. Adapted from a Graham Greene story."

"Thriller about a British spy who disappears in Venice."

TV Quick review:

"Drama. British spy Trevor Howard disappears in Venice during a visit by young son Richard O'Sullivan who's left feeling alone and confused."

What's On TV notes:

"Spy mystery. A British agent, en route to visit his son in Italy, disappears. A Graham Greene story, high on suspense. With Trevor Howard."

"A son searches for his father in Venice."

"A young son searches for his missing father. With Trevor Howard."

"When a British espionage officer disappears in Venice, his young son is alone and frightened."

"The young son of a British espionage officer is left alone when his father disappears in Venice."

Sunday Times note:

"Graham Greene thriller starring Trevor Howard."

Daily Mirror note:

"A British intelligence officer is kidnapped in Venice, leaving his son to fend for himself. Suspense drama starring Trevor Howard."

The Moving Picture Boy entry on O'Sullivan:

"His father was a mechanic, and Richard started elocution and dancing lessons when he was four. Three years later he made his film debut, playing Trevor Howard's son in "**THE STRANGER'S HAND**", and two years after that, in "**DANGEROUS EXILE**", he was royalty: a somewhat fictional version of poor Louis XVIII, happily escaped to Wales. O'Sullivan, by now sporting his characteristic twisted smile, pressed on into a mixture of teenage rave-ups and grown-up weepies: "**THE NUN'S STORY**" (60), "**A STORY OF DAVID**" (60), "**AND WOMEN SHALL WEEP**" (60), "**SPARE THE ROD**" (61), "**THE YOUNG ONES**" (62), then "**CLEOPATRA**" (63, as Ptolemy), "**WONDERFUL LIFE**" (64), "**A DANDY IN ASPIC**" (68), "**THE HAUNTED HOUSE OF HORROR**" (69) and so on into the Seventies.

Hereafter, though, his career lay largely in television. In comedy series like "**Doctor at Large**", "**Doctor in Charge**", "**Father, Dear Father**", "**Man About the House**", "**Robin's Nest**", "**Me and My Girl**" and "**Trouble in Mind**", O'Sullivan became one of Britain's most popular light comedians of the wry, homely kind. As a change of scene, he also played the title role in a "**Dick Turpin**" series."

O'Sullivan was 9. Among his other films were **"IT'S GREAT TO BE YOUNG"** (56) and **"CARRY ON TEACHER"** (59), and before his emergence as light comedy lead he cornered the market in persecuted British schoolboys. Having met the cane in both the above titles, he was singled out by sadistic schoolmasters in both **"SPARE THE ROD"** (61) and **"THE WEBSTER BOY"** (61). He also made a guest appearance on TV's **"The Adventures of Robin Hood"** with Richard Greene. Venice, of course, later made a baroque, disquieting backdrop to **"MORTE A VENEZIA" / "DEATH IN VENICE"** and **"DON'T LOOK NOW"**.

See subject index under **KIDNAPPING**, where on occasion children have themselves been the kidnappers, but this is the only instance known to me where the parent is kidnapped from under the nose of the child.