

The Other

US : 1972 : dir. Robert Mulligan : Rex / Benchmark / 20th Century Fox : 100 min
 prod: Tom Tryon; Robert Mulligan : scr: Tom Tryon : dir.ph.: Robert Surtees
 score: Jerry Goldsmith

[Chris Udvarnoky](#) [d]; [Martin Udvarnoky](#) [d]; [Clarence Crow](#).....

Uta Hagen; Diana Muldaur; Norma Connolly; Victor French; Portia Nelson; John Ritter;
 Chris Connelly; Loretta Leversee; Lou Frizzell; Jenny Sullivan; Jack Collins; Ed Bakey

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	KBytes	Ω □ ≠ Z ☼	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Till death us do part – Niles and Holland Perry

Source: The Moving Picture Boy

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
1996 review:

"Eerie tale of the supernatural, with twin brothers representing good and evil. Stark, chilling mood tale adapted by Thomas Tryon from his own novel. *** "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review - identical to above

Halliwell's Film Guide review:

"A boy insists that his dead twin is responsible for several unexplained deaths. Subtle family ghost story for intellectuals; a bit pretentious and restrained for popular success. * "

Film Review 1974-75 review:

"Intricate, not to say somewhat confusing at times, story about identical twin boys, one of whom is good and the other is not so much horrid as a public danger! And it is all very creepily set against a background of a small Connecticut river town in the summer of '35. Cert. X "

"Fox's **"THE OTHER"** (from the novel by Thomas Tryon) was based on the old theme of two identical twins¹, one good and the other... well, in this case little short of a public menace; and all very menacingly set against a background of a Connecticut small town during the summer of '35."

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89
review:

"Unpleasant thriller based on Thomas Tryon's horrific novel about twin boys who keep changing identities. **1/2 "

Rating the Movies (1990) review:

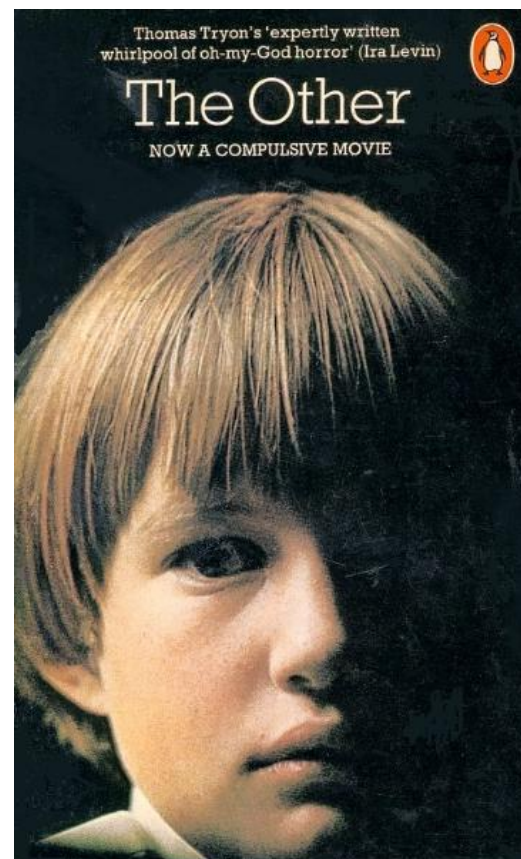
"A brilliant supernatural thriller that is both a lyrical and a nightmarish paean to the powers of the imagination. In Connecticut during the mid-1930s, a pair of 10-year old identical twins (Chris and Martin Udvarnoky) appear to be the

¹ Yes.. *twins tend to come in pairs, don't they*

cause behind a household's history of tragic and frightening incidents, The nature of that link, and how it relates to "The Game", is thrillingly unravelled in the course of the film. Probably the peak of director Mulligan's career. Tom Tryon adapted the screenplay from his own novel. Photographed by the great Robert Surtees. Evocative supporting performances by Hagen and Muldaur. ***1/2"

The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television review:

"Produced by scriptwriter-novelist Thomas Tryon and directed by Robert Mulligan, this yarn involves curses, madness, twins, hallucination, murders and kidnappings. Uta Hagen, as a fairly sinister grandmother, is the only even moderately-known name in the cast. 7 "



Variety Movie Guide 1993 review:

"The apparently sluggish opening reels of **"THE OTHER"** subsequently justify themselves among many other mind-engrossing plot twists in this occult shocker. The film (written by actor Tom Tryon from his first novel) is an

outstanding example of top-flight writing structure and dialogue, enhanced to full



fruition by a knowing director.
Rats are SCARIER than rabbits...

On a small Connecticut farm in 1935 a tragedy-stricken family is plagued further with a series of deaths. The story unfolds around, and from the viewpoint of, Diana Muldaur's two young identical twin sons, expertly played by 10-year olds Chris and Martin Udvarnoky. Martin is aloof, introverted, and a downbeat influence on Chris, whose more normal juvenile attributes and fantasies are nurtured lovingly by Hagen. Tryon and Mulligan have seeded the story with many clues and visible occasions for misjudgement. "

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"Screenwriter Thomas Tryon, adapting his bestselling novel, raises plenty of goose bumps. This supernatural tale of good and evil, as personified by twin brothers, creates a genuinely eerie mood. Legendary acting coach Uta Hagen contributes a compelling performance. Director Robert Mulligan, keeping the emphasis on characterisations, never allows the suspense to lag. ***½ "

Source: *Film Review 1974-75*

The Films of 20th Century Fox – A Pictorial History comment:

"Thomas Tryon's best-selling Gothic novel, in a fine screen treatment and with his own scripting. The story takes place during a hot summer in New England in the 1930's, as a pair of twins (Chris and Martin Udvarnoky) cavort around a farmhouse. Strange things happen, including several deaths and injuries. A new-born baby is found floating in a wine cask. It seems the boys are possessed by evil and at the end it also seems that evil may not have been fully exorcised. A splendid tale of horror with a fine, visual sense of period. "

Sight and Sound - Winter 72/73 - note:

"Childish imagination runs amok during the endless summer of '35 - a dead twin is called up to play the part of wicked alter ego, grandmother plays with personality projection, and an ancestral curse vies with family madness.

Robert Mulligan's generous attention to detail and atmosphere is stretched to cover every homicidal aberration and intimation of doom.
”

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "International Film Guide 1972", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Cover note from the Penguin novel ('73):

“It is the summer of 1935 and, in a sleepy New England town, people are talking about the epidemic of accidents up at the Perrys’ house. Vining and Russell Perry, man and boy, mysteriously killed. Another boy drowned in a skating tragedy. Vining’s widow fallen downstairs... Accidents?

Vining’s sons are an odd pair, mocking withdrawn Holland and nice, generous Niles. Involved in a telepathy game with their Russina grandmother. A game that might be getting horribly out of hand...

"The Other" is a masterly exercise in brooding terror, a subtle study in tortured family life. A triumph for Tom Tryon. And a chilling experience for the reader.”

The Moving Picture Boy entry on the Udvarnoky twins:

“In "THE OTHER", a curious, effective horror melodrama scripted by Tom Tryon from his own novel, the Udvarnoky twins play twins Niles and Holland – the complication being that Holland is really dead, and only kept alive in Niles’ fantasy as a playmate and convenient scapegoat for his own wicked and more vindictive acts, which don’t stop short of murder.²

The Udvarnokies, a pair of pudgy blonds, are fine in their secret games – all, it turns out, fermenting in the warped mind of Niles. Robert Mulligan, directing with bravura, plays his own game of double-bluff on the audience. By never showing the twins incontrovertibly together in full shot until the closing moments of the film, he encourages our belief that the "double act" is the usual fake: the final shot, when one sees that the twins really are separate boys, is worth waiting for.³ ”



The dusty carpet treatment - a crotchety neighbour catches Niles - or is it Holland? – up to no good in her barn. She can't tell them apart. The problem is, neither can he...

...evidently schizophrenic, and by the end of the film – as in "PSYCHO", the stronger personality of Holland has taken over completely.

³ Holstrom is writing from memory it seems. The twins are often shown in full shot together, and the final wearisome "surprise" is merely that Niles has survived his grandmother's attempt to immolate him.

Thomas Tryon was author of "Harvest Home", adapted as a TV mini-series with Bette Davis. His first book, and this film, is less about pagan beliefs and rituals humming below the quiet surface of rural American life (although they do play a part) than the darker and none-too-wholesome recesses of a child's imagination. It's a story very much in the Ray Bradbury mould of creepy tales steeped in nostalgia for midwest American boyhood.

Remember Norman Bates? "**THE OTHER**" plays out very much like a sly variant on that theme. In place of a strangulating mother/son relationship we have here inseparable twins, identical in body but not in mind. To be sure, the good twin/evil twin yarn is as old as the hills, but Tryon keeps the audience guessing until the final reel by throwing in a twist or two.

Father dead, mother convalescing in bed from some unspecified trauma, Niles's principal relationship is with his Russian ex-patriate grandmother, who has taught him a mind-projection trick she calls "The Game". With her help he is able to project his consciousness into the minds of birds and animals, even other people, experiencing what they experience.

When relatives and neighbours begin dropping like flies – "**THE OTHER**" has a body count to rival that of "**DAMIEN, OMEN II**" – and Niles persists in blaming all the wrongdoing on Holland, his grandmother finally realises what she has done, and forces him to confront the truth he has been evading for years. But too late, the dominant personality of Holland will not surrender its home in Niles.

As a supernatural chiller it falls down, because the mood is neither grim nor disquieting enough, and the horror keypoints are handled in a desultory fashion. It's not giving away too much to say that one of the twins is already dead, and a very robust, fleshy spook he makes. Forget your exorcisms, if ever there was a ghost who just needed a good sound spanking, this is it.

In the *malevolent kiddie* stakes, this film does not rate very highly, (compared, say, to "**VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED**") because all of the genuine wickedness – the drowning of the new baby, the planting of the pitchfork in a haystack to polish off tiresome cousin Russell (Clarence Crow) – happens off camera. We know that Holland (Niles) is doing these things, the director fails to distinguish between malicious intent and simple 10-year old recklessness.

Nothing further is known of the Udvarnokys. Halliwell's and Scheuer's reviews both list the film's "principal players" but, with characteristic contempt for juvenile actors, they omit to name the twins who are the focal point of the film and scarcely out of shot throughout.

See subject index under **THE CHILD AS EVIL IN OUR MIDST, GHOSTS & HAUNTINGS, GREAT DEPRESSION / 1930s SETTINGS, HORROR, TWINS / LOOKALIKES** and **SCAMPS, RASCALS & RAGAMUFFINS**.