

= The Mountain Eagle =

The Mountain Eagle is a 1927 British silent film , and Alfred Hitchcock 's second as director following The Pleasure Garden . The film , a romantic melodrama set in Kentucky , is about a widower (Bernhard Goetzke) who jealously competes with his crippled son (John F. Hamilton) and a man he loathes (Malcolm Keen) over the affections of a schoolteacher (Nita Naldi) . The film was mostly produced at the Emelka Film studios in Munich , Germany in autumn of 1925 , with exterior scenes shot in the village of Obergurgl in the State of Tyrol , Austria . Production was plagued with problems , including the destruction of a village roof and Hitchcock experiencing altitude sickness . Due to producing the film in Germany , Hitchcock had more directorial freedom than he would have had in England , and he was influenced by German cinematic style and technique .

The film was screened for the producers in October 1926 who did not approve of it , and it wasn 't until after the success of Hitchcock 's The Lodger : A Story of the London Fog that they released the film in May 1927 . The film was poorly received and criticised for its lack of realism , and Hitchcock himself was relieved that the film was lost . Six surviving stills of The Mountain Eagle are reproduced in François Truffaut 's book , and further stills have been found to exist . In 2012 , a set of 24 still photographs were found in an archive of one of Hitchcock 's close friends . The Cine Tirol Film Commission has described it as " the most wanted film in the world " , and the British Film Institute has the film on the top of their list of missing films and is actively searching for it .

= = Plot = =

The film is set in Kentucky . J. P. Pettigrew 's (Bernhard Goetzke) wife died giving birth to his son Edward (John F. Hamilton) , who was born a cripple . Pettigrew loathes John (" Fear o ' God ") Fulton (Malcolm Keen) who was also in love with Pettigrew 's wife . Pettigrew witnesses his now grown son making love to schoolteacher Beatrice (Nita Naldi) and confronts her about the relationship . He attempts to take her in his arms but Beatrice rejects his advances . Pettigrew 's son Edward sees this and flees the village .

Pettigrew is incensed at both Beatrice 's rejection and the loss of his son . He attempts to have Beatrice arrested as a wanton harlot . John forestalls Pettigrew 's plan by marrying Beatrice and taking her to his cabin where they fall in love . Beatrice becomes pregnant . Pettigrew seeks revenge by having John thrown in prison for murdering his (missing) son .

A year later , John breaks out of prison and attempts to flee with Beatrice and their child . However , Beatrice falls ill and John must return to the village for a doctor . There he finds that Edward has reappeared . John 's affairs are now cleared up and he is legally free from the charge of murder . Pettigrew is subsequently accidentally shot and no longer a threat to John and his family .

= = Cast = =

Nita Naldi as Beatrice
Malcolm Keen as John ' Fear o ' God ' Fulton
John F. Hamilton as Edward Pettigrew
Bernhard Goetzke as J.P. Pettigrew
Ferdinand Martini

= = Preservation status = =

This is the only feature film directed by Hitchcock that is considered a lost film , which means that no prints of the film are known to exist . Six surviving stills are reproduced in François Truffaut 's book . More stills have recently been found to exist , many of which are reproduced in Dan Auiler 's book . A lobby card for the film was found in a box of broken frames at a flea market in Rowley , Massachusetts . In 2012 , a set of 24 still photographs were found in an archive of one of Hitchcock

's close friends . Although these images gave clues to the film and its story , they were taken on the set rather than being stills from the film itself . They were auctioned off in Los Angeles for \$ 6 @,@ 000 (£ 3 @,@ 700) . Hitchcock 's notebooks were also found which documented his journey to Obergurgl , by train , horse and cart , and by foot .

= = Production = =

Both The Pleasure Garden and The Mountain Eagle were produced in co @-@ operation with Emelka Film Studios in Munich , Germany . The film was mostly shot at Emelka in Munich in the fall of 1925 , and the film exteriors were shot on location in Obergurgl , in what is now the municipality of Sölden in the State of Tyrol in southwestern Austria , the Ötztal Alps standing in for the mountains and hollows of Kentucky . Due to producing the film in Germany , Hitchcock had more directorial freedom than he would have had in England , and influences in the technique and style of German cinema are evident in his early works .

Production was plagued with problems . Bad weather during the shooting was a constant source of trouble , and Hitchcock and the crew had an uneasy relationship with the locals . Hitchcock ordered the clearance of snow from a meadow and ordered the local volunteer fire brigade to blast it away , causing the roof of a nearby building to collapse . The mayor demanded compensation of one shilling , but Hitchcock gave the woman who owned the house two shillings to cover the repair work and the inconvenience . Hitchcock offended the locals by refusing to stay at the village inn , and when he was taken ill with altitude sickness , he blamed the sickness on his reaction to the guttural sound of their accents .

= = Reception = =

The film was initially screened for the producers in October 1926 , but they didn 't think much of the film and decided to shelve it . However , due to the runaway success of The Lodger : A Story of the London Fog , which was released in February 1927 , the producers decided to release The Mountain Eagle three months later on 23 May 1927 . The film was reportedly released in the United States as Fear o ' God , but the title on the surviving US lobby card seems to contradict this . Film historian J. Larry Kuhns claims that the film was never released under that title .

The film , distributed by Gainsborough Pictures , was neither a critical nor commercial success ; Leonard J. Leff states that the film " impressed neither the distributor nor the public " . Like Hitchcock 's other early films , the film was criticised for a lack of realism ; an early review by Bioscope stated that " in spite of skilful and at times brilliant direction , the story has an air of unreality . " Hitchcock himself considered The Mountain Eagle to be mundane melodrama best forgotten , and described the film to François Truffaut as " awful " and a " very bad movie " and stated that he was not sorry that there are no known prints . After being bitterly disappointed with his first two films , Hitchcock believed that his directing career would soon be over , although he later described Waltzes from Vienna (1934) to be the " lowest ebb " of his career . Film historian J. Larry Kuhns , however , states in the book Hitchcock 's Notebooks by Dan Auiler that one contemporary writer called The Mountain Eagle far superior to The Lodger . The Guardian describes the film as " a ripping yarn about a dastardly father , a crippled son , a lovely schoolteacher and an innocent imprisoned " .

William Rothman considers both The Pleasure Garden and The Mountain Eagle to be " equally worthy of study " . The Cine Tirol Film Commission has described The Mountain Eagle as " the most wanted film in the world " . In 1992 , the British Film Institute released its first " Missing Presumed Lost " list of films , and in January 2010 they announced that they had begun actively searching for some 75 missing films , including The Mountain Eagle ; A Study in Scarlet (1914) , which features the first screen appearance of the Sherlock Holmes character ; The First Men in the Moon (1919) , which is the first H. G. Wells @-@ adapted science @-@ fiction ; and Dinah Shurey 's The Last Post (1929) .