

# Videos of the odd variety

By DIAHANN NADEAU

Herald Special

I couldn't do it - I couldn't bring myself to see Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure or Police Academy 6.

Life's too short to see movies with titles like these. And I'm certainly too old to spend two hours in the theatre watching them. So I chose a couple of odd videos to review.

### THE DEAD

In honor of St. Patrick's Day I watched The Dead, John Huston's last film, based on a James Joyce short story and filmed in Dublin. I haven't read the story, I'm sorry to say. However, that didn't stop me from enjoying this wistful little jewel, a charming and slight film that has left me groping for words to describe it.

The Dead is about a party at the house of a couple of elderly ladies in 1904 Dublin. It is Epiphany and people are gathering to sing, recite poetry, and get drunk. Nephew Gabriel and his wife Gretta (Donal McCann and Anjelica Huston) arrive and help carve the goose and give a toast. Then they go home. Gretta tells Gabriel the story of a 17-year-old boy who loved her and died because he got sick visiting her on a rainy night. She goes to sleep and Gabriel stares out the window, thinking about life, love, and death. And that is it.

This movie is only 83 minutes long. It is full of glances that say things when the conversation doesn't; and Donal McCann manages to convey to us just how hollow life is with just his face. I really liked this film, although it is quiet, odd, and very difficult to explain. You must pay attention, and of course it wouldn't hurt to read the story first. I wish I'd had the time before writing this review.

### A TIME OF DESTINY

This is another odd film, but on a much larger scale. William Hurt and Timothy Hutton star in this story of love, hate, and revenge set in the 1940s. The story is told in flashbacks, from Italy in 1945 to San Diego in 1943 and back. Hurt, in an uncharacteristic role, plays

### AT THE MOVIES

the villain, Martin, a psychotic with a revenge complex. His sister Josie (Melissa Leo), eloped with a soldier named Jack (Hutton). Father is a Basque immigrant with a stern hand who goes to take her back. On the way home, chased by Jack, the car goes into the river and Papa dies. Martin, who did not get along with his father, swears revenge and follows Jack off to war.

He is transferred to Jack's unit and the two become buddies.

However, Jack doesn't know who Martin is and Martin never lets go of his hatred. They finally come home and Martin tries to kill Jack in a cinematic climax atop a church steeple.

William Hurt is not always convincing, but there is a scene in front of a mirror where he bares all psychologically and it works very well. Hutton is fine as straight arrow Jack. Leo is beautiful and sympathetic. This is a strange film and I cannot recommend it unreservedly. However, it is not an unsuccessful one - once you adjust to the style.

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