“He Who Must Die”

Emotion-Filled Film
Now at River Oaks

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In an action approaching martyrdom, the River Oaks Theater has presented Houstonians with a rare treat, an outstanding film. “He Who Must Die,” a French film adapted from The Greek Passion, a novel by Nikos Kazantzakis, and filmed on the island of Crete under the direction of Jules Dassin, is easily one of the best films of recent years. The action occurs in a small Greek village under Turkish domination near the end of World War I. With the approval of the Turk in charge, the traditional passion play is planned and the characters are selected.

The town whore is selected to play Mary Magdalene; her chief consort, to play Judas; a postman, innkeeper, and son of the town’s leading citizen, to play disciples; and a stuttering shepherd, to play Christ.

As the plot progresses, these players become deeply involved and assume the personalities of the characters they are portraying. With the proposition that if Christ returned to earth, the Christian Church would crucify Him, the picture builds to an ending of emotion-shattering intensity.