

Roberts carries thriller; comedy has moments

NEW YORK (CNS) — Once the honeymoon is over, Julia Roberts realizes she is "Sleeping With the Enemy (20th Century Fox).

Martin Burney (Patrick Bergin) is a sick man — obsessed with his wife Laura (Roberts) who he viciously beats.

Laura knows a legal restraining order would never stop her wealthy husband from tracking her down if she left him. So when her instant of opportunity comes for escape, she is ready; she fakes drowning off Cape Cod and flees to Iowa, establishing a new identity.

Into her life comes a college drama teacher (Kevin Anderson) who senses she is hiding something horrible in her past and patiently waits for her to confide in him.

Meanwhile her husband is accidentally given information that makes him realize Laura has tricked him and is still out there somewhere, mocking him.

The chase is on. State by state and day by day he closes in on her. When Martin finds Laura in the arms of another man his composure cracks. This time the death will be real, the only question being who will die.

It is a simple, sleek thriller that Joseph Ruben has directed, and Roberts carries the film.

An actress who improves with each role, Roberts affectingly conveys the vulnerability yet inner strength of the abused wife, terrorized and terrified, beaten up but not beaten.

Lush would best describe the look of the film — it's beautifully photographed. The story line, however, is strictly no frills,



In "Sleeping with the Enemy," Julia Roberts plays Laura Burney, a young woman who takes desperate measures to escape her husband, played by Patrick Bergin, who is obsessed with holding on to the woman he loves — at any cost.

straightforward, without any subplots and little real ingenuity.

Bergin and Anderson are as sadistic and sincere as they are called on to be but their characterizations feel underdeveloped. Nice touches and chilling moments pepper the film, but it falters badly with a false ending that by now is such a cinematic cliché it's unworthy of classy thrillers.

Due to some violence, restrained marital encounter and minimal rough language, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

'L.A. Story'

The trendy populace of Los Angeles gets smartly skewered in comedian Steve Mar-

tin's "L.A. Story" (Tri-Star).

Harris (Martin) is ripe for change. He's so bored being a TV weatherman that he pre-tapes the weekend weather. His snooty girlfriend (Marilyn Henner) is cheating on him. Then suddenly he meets two distinctly different females.

He's quickly lassoed by the ditzy and free-spirited SanDeE, (Sarah Jessica Parker), but it's Sara (Victoria Tennant) who utterly intrigues him. She's a reserved English journalist, but unfortunately only briefly visiting Los Angeles to write a story and see her ex-husband (Richard E. Grant).

One night something magical happens to Harris — an electronic freeway sign spells out to him that the weather will change his life. From then on he has to weather the

uncertainties of winning over Sara despite the advances of her ex-husband and advancing assertiveness of randy SanDeE.

The plot is minimal, but the humor is maximum in director Mick Jackson's film which was written by Martin.

Martin casts a wry eye on the L.A. scene much like Woody Allen does on his home turf, New York City.

The first half is liberally dotted with slice-of-life dialogue that captures and lampoons some of the craziness that is La-La Land. Where else would you consider going to an enema institute on a first date? "It clears your head," enthuses the anatomically ignorant SanDeE.

As Martin runs out of sight gags and clever repartee, the film's romance aspect takes over. This is fairly bland stuff, though it can be interpreted as a love poem to his real-life wife, Tennant. She looks luminous on camera but her character development is pretty static. Parker, on the other hand, bounces around endlessly and jumps into bed as if she never heard of morality or AIDS.

Martin is at his best when lancing L.A. trends, as in the scene where he must be interviewed by three people before securing a restaurant reservation. It's all in good fun, however, and the satire is not mean-spirited. The fantasy element involving the weather is well-shot, as is the whole film, but it is the dialogue that shines in this comedy, whereas direction, plot and performances are run-of-the-mill.

Due to a casual attitude toward premarital sex and minimal rough language, the USCC classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.



TV weatherman Harris K. Telemacher (Steve Martin) obeys the direction of a freeway sign, and kisses journalist Sara McDowel (Victoria Tennant) in the comedy "L.A. Story."

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