

## REFLECTIONS OF LIGHT

(A.k.a. RIFLESSI DI LUCE)

Beneath the bleeding of classical piano on the soundtrack, we first meet former concert pianist Federico (Gabriele Tinti). He lives in a mansion surrounded by acres of beautiful greenery. Federico has an attractive son in Marcello (Gabriele Gori), and a hot second wife in Marta (Pamela Prati).



However, as we discover when Federico's narration clues us in on the content of a letter he writes to old pal Lorenzo, he has reasons to be unhappy. Firstly, he has been confined to a wheelchair since being crippled in an accident three years earlier. Secondly, he misses his true love - drowned first wife Chiara (Laura Gemser). Lastly, he fears that his current family do not love him, but merely pity him.

Marta's loyalty to Federico certainly seems dubious from the offset: in the film's first ten minutes we witness her indulging in some decidedly lesbianiffic garden hose-spraying with live-in secretary Giorgia (Loredana Romito) while her husband sulks indoors.

Mind, he's hardly loyal either: his thoughts are very firmly still on Chiara - and the sex life he shared with her (as too few flashbacks illustrate). When Federico isn't avoiding spending time with his family, he's treating them like shit. We witness him berating them for no good reason over the dinner table one evening, and later forcing Marta into rough sex before casting her aside immediately afterwards.

We're not the only ones observing Federico's lack of affection towards Marta: Giorgia recognises it too, and ends that night by offering to comfort her boss's wife with the reassuring line "we can sleep together".

As you've probably deduced, a lesbian affair develops rather swiftly thereafter.

The following morning we learn of Marcello's dreams of becoming a jockey. He exercises his horse on Federico's land and ends up bumping into the pretty Gaia (Jessica Moore), with whom he soon develops a relationship.

And so, the film unfurls in episodic fashion: the burgeoning lesbian affair shared between Marta and Giorgia is developed whenever Federico is out of the house, such as when visiting his doctor; Marcello becomes increasingly enraptured with young Gaia; Federico continues to treat his closest ones like crap, and blow hot and cold with Marta while struggling to write his latest concerto in-between.

As events develop - slowly - we learn more of Federico's bitterness towards his son's involvement with horseracing: jealousy, or protection? And, Marta learns of the secret letters Federico has been writing, professing his eternal love for his former wife.

Worst of all, Marcello and Gaia learn of the affair between Marta and Giorgia ... but only after Marcello has got fresh with Marta himself (!) ...

Convolutd, ham-fisted and downright confused, REFLECTIONS does not boast a coherent plot. Its script is weak, and the performances are of the disciplined "Okay, now look sad" variety.

What it lacks in fluency and cast commitment, however, the film makes up for with some attractive sun-kissed cinematography and good-looking actresses willing to bare some flesh when needs be.

Prati is a hot proposition and gets naked frequently (the early hosing scene being a choice moment), while Gemser looks great considering this a much later production than the ones we're familiar with.

Tinti has a disconcertingly grey rug on his chest, and is further hampered by a script that allows for him to do nothing other than be surly and disagreeable. His character is not worthy of our pity, and as a result the film becomes difficult to warm to too.

Gori becomes the moral spear of the film but he too is too conflicted, often too sullen, to convey the required humanity. And, two-thirds into the film when he batters a female character, any hopes of him redeeming himself are completely shattered. Consequently, there is no character we are able to identify with - even Marta, arguably the most hard-done-by, is guilty of relations with her husband's son and secretary ...

The sex is of the tame, stylish "Red Shoe Diaries" variety. The pace is non-existent. The denouement is not as profound or moving as it perhaps seemed on paper. The direction - from SATAN'S BABY DOLL's Mario Bianchi - is perfunctory at best.

And yet the film remains worth recommending in this Italian language version for the aforementioned slick visuals, hot women and - most of all - the latter-day pairing of real-life couple Gemser and the late Tinti on screen.

Bianchi's 1988 slice of dark erotica has remained largely unseen until now. Thanks to the folk at Sinful Mermaid, this curiosity co-starring the ever-watchable Gemser/Tinti pairing can now be enjoyed in all its glory.

Presented uncut in a very nice 1.33:1 transfer, colours are bold and images sharp in this sterling effort. The transfer is remarkably clean, and the overall job, despite some natural softness, is a highly impressive one indeed.

The original Italian mono audio track is proffered, and runs without hitch throughout. The balance between the insipid piano-led score and the hokey dialogue is well maintained. Optional English subtitles are accurate and easy to read.

A fetching animated main menu focuses on the film's lesbian coupling and gives access to an animated scene-selection menu allowing access to the main feature via 12 chapters.

The only extra on the disc is a stills gallery which runs, with musical accompaniment, as a 2-minute featurette. All in all, the slideshow offers 27 screen-grabs.

Perhaps best suited to late-night TV, REFLECTIONS is an also-ran of the Euro sleaze subgenre that became popular in the 1970s. Being made in 1988, it was simply more than a decade too late to register with fans.

But, as dated as it is by its fashions and score (few films of the 80s have aged well, to be fair), this autumnal film is still worth checking out for fans of Gemser and Tinti.

The disc from Sinful Mermaid is an unexpected treasure, providing an excellent transfer and the added bonus of the original Italian soundtrack with optional English subtitles.

Review by Stu Willis

Released by Sinful Mermaid

Region 1 - NTSC

Not Rated

Extras :

see main review

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