

Malle's 'Damage' falters in the home stretch

by Hollywood Rob

With *Damage*, French director Louis Malle takes on territory with which he is very familiar—exploration of unconventional sexual relationships.

Based on Josephine Hart's novel of the same name, the film explores a bizarre love triangle between a father, a son and the woman with which they are both obsessed.

The father, Dr. Stephen Fleming, is played by actor Jeremy Irons whose work in *Reversal of Fortune* two years ago garnered him a deserved Academy Award. He heads a cast of all English actors who turn in fine performances despite some flaws in other areas of the film.

Fleming is a member of



Damage

Starring Jeremy Irons, Juliette Binoche, Miranda Richardson.
Directed by Louis Malle.

the English parliament whose job confines him to a rigidly respectable and utterly passionless existence.

His son Martyn, played even-handedly by Rupert Graves, is a journalist in charge of political affairs. Martyn's job should force him to criticize his father in print,

which might have brought an even higher level of tension to the story had the filmmakers chosen to explore it.

Anna Barton is the woman with whom they are both involved. Anna is Martyn's girlfriend and that fact is clearly established when the senior Fleming (Irons) takes

on the relationship. Anna is played with astonishing subtlety by Juliette Binoche whose beauty would almost make the viewer believe that anyone could be able to go mad over her.

The filmmakers are obviously counting on this for little substantial evidence is offered to explain the senior Fleming's involvement with Anna. Irons' character is saddled with what would seem a dreary, but stable existence with a wife of many years, a good respectable job and two kids. Martyn who has already left the nest and an awkward 15-year-old daughter.

His wife is played by Miranda Richardson who won critical raves in last year's *Enchanted April*. Her performance is guided and restrained until near the end when she becomes stunning and explosive.

Told from Irons' point of view, *Damage* details the ultimate mid-life crisis. His slow unravelling and attempt to control the events in his life dictate his fall from grace. Attempts to lead the two divergent paths of his life at once push him only further into the delusion that he can reestablish some kind of or-

der. Once he has bitten the forbidden fruit, (Anna) his life has been sealed.

Anna, who would seem to be the antagonist here, is really a little girl who has never grown up since her brother's suicide when she was 15. She looks and acts her age, but mentally she still seems trapped by her trauma. She doesn't intend for it to get in the way, but her closeness to her brother linked with her fear of commitment brings this story to a startling conclusion.

All the warning signs are posted, but Irons' character disregards them. It is excruciating to watch because the viewer knows Martyn will eventually find out about his father and Anna, yet Irons' character presses on. His sexual hunger for her overpowers everything else in his life.

It is unfortunate that with so many things going for it, the movie ultimately falls flat about 45 minutes into its 112-minute running time. Somehow the characters came to the audience and then backed away. The proceedings remain very interesting, but only slightly in-

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Christopher Lambert stars in 'Knight Moves.'

'Knight Moves' is an all-star B-movie dud

by Daniel W. Duffy

Although it has enough B-movie actors to make John Waters pleased as punch, the new psychothriller *Knight Moves* isn't even campy enough to tickle the twisted funny bone in all of us. I've seen better Kung Fu movies than this.

Christopher Lambert (*Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan*, the *Highlander* licks and arguably the reigning prince of bad movies) stars as chess champion who becomes the number one suspect in a string of killings. Tom Skeritt (*The KING of B-movies these days*) and Daniel



Knight Moves

Starring Christopher Lambert, Diane Lane and Tom Skeritt.
Directed by Carl Schenkel.

Baldwin (the black sheep brother of Alec and William) are the two cops investigating the murders. They employ psychologist Diane Lane (hubba-hubba) to help them.

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