



41st SEASON

ENGLISH FILM CLUB 2020 - 21

Massagno, LUX ART HOUSE

18.15

Friday, 16th October 2020

THE GOOD LIAR

2019

109 minutes

Directed by Bill Condon

Starring: Helen Mirren, Ian McKellen

Roy Courtney is an aging British con artist (=superb storyteller who cheats people) who, along with his business partner Vincent, uses false identities to manipulate people into giving him access to their finances. His target is Betty McLeish, a former history professor at Oxford University who lost her husband a year ago and has savings in excess of £2 million.

Feigning a bad knee, Roy manipulates Betty into allowing him to stay at her house. He steadily encourages her to open a joint offshore investment account with him, so that he can steal her money.

Betty's grandson Steven (Russell Torvy) is instantly suspicious of Roy and worries that his vulnerable grandmother is rushing into things far too quickly. With the aid of his partner, Roy's plan is to convince Betty that, as a way of planning for their financial futures, they should put their respective bankrolls (with hers clocking in at nearly three million pounds) into a joint account that each will have access to but which he will, of course, drain immediately before disappearing.

Roy and Betty spend a holiday in Berlin, where Roy appears to understand German, though he claims he does not. Betty's grandson Steven takes the couple to a flat that Roy recognizes. Steven reveals that 'Roy Courtney'—a young British Army officer—was killed there in 1948 by a Nazi war criminal whom he was tracking, according to Soviet records. This causes Roy to explain that his real name is Hans Taub, who was Roy's German translator, and that he stole Roy's identity so that he could leave Germany and reinvent himself. Betty accepts his explanation and dismisses Steven's objections.

Critics' comments:

Through it all, however, Mirren and McKellen never waver. Smooth at being smooth, their conviction always convinces us, and their ability to register multiple subtle changes of emotion is consistently impressive.
(Los Angeles Times – November 15th, 2019)

The way they listen, look into each other's eyes, absorb each word and every silence, while sipping a flute of champagne or sharing a cup of tea—it's a revelation, and a master class in acting at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art at the same time. Together, they redefine rapture.
(The Observer – November 18th, 2019)