



TROPPIA GRAZIA

(LUCIA'S GRACE)

A FILM BY
GIANNI ZANASI

quinzaine
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
CANNES

SYNOPSIS



Single working mother Lucia is trying to find the right balance between life with her teenage daughter, a complicated romance and her career as a land surveyor.

Lucia's future is jeopardized when she realizes that an ambitious new building is environmentally dangerous due to the city council's inaccurate maps. Lucia is torn by her decision to keep her mouth shut for fear of losing her job. A mysterious foreign woman tries to convince Lucia to stand up to her superiors and recommend a church as the only solution for the troubled building site. Lucia's belief in miracles will soon be put to the test.



COMMENTS

FROM GIANNI ZANASI

» I do not think anyone really knows why a story gets told. When all is said and done, I think that's for the best. Perhaps there is no why, perhaps there is just a how.

Lucia "appeared" to me for the first time quite unexpectedly. I saw her walking aimlessly, on her own, in a large shopping mall. But immediately I saw quite a "wild" character, an independent spirit. I thought perhaps she lived in a provincial town. Perhaps Lucia had spent her childhood in a beautiful field.



As I followed her, I felt she was weighed down by something. It was related to the feeling of unending daily drudgery. A weight that was obviously my own, so strong that the unthinkable suddenly happened: Lucia turns around, and there is the girl wearing the veil, staring at her and saying, with the seriousness of another age: «Go and talk to the men...». Lucia looks at her, frightened, and replies (and I with her): «Why don't YOU go...». And I burst out laughing. I couldn't believe it. Honestly that was how it began. With a good belly laugh.

COMMENTS

FROM GIANNI ZANASI

And that laugh touched some extremes. The sudden and incongruous feeling of the Mystery, our life that has contact with another world, even in a commonplace sort of way: the unmoving, powerful mystery on the one hand, and our mixed-up day-to-day lives on the other. The profound questions we feel, the bumbling, random answers we give to them, and even more so the questions we avoid. Truths and lies.

Troppa Grazia (Lucia's Grace) immediately presented itself as a film of extremes that can be touched and contrasted. But at the time I was confused, I didn't know why it was me that had to make a film with the Virgin Mary. In the end I stored the image, I thought it was both beautiful and crazy, and passed on to something else.

Only a few years later, again quite out of the blue and with no rhyme or reason, the voice of the Holy Mary returned, asking «Have you been to talk to the men?» and that of Lucia answering, anxiously, «Hey, I don't talk to men, don't you think that's your business?». And I again laughed out loud. I began to write the screenplay. But I have to be honest, it was not with a full conscience. With the first draft, what got me interested and working day after day was the fact I was laughing so much. I also realised that with it being so eccentric, this story could have gone on to be many things: an irreverent sit-com, a reflection on modern-day religion, and so on. The difference was that in no time at all I was enamoured of Lucia, and fell into a completely empathic relationship with her. How can you fail to love someone who says to the Virgin Mary "I've already said no! You're more insistent than a little child!". Putting myself in her shoes, I asked myself: what if it happened to me? Not in a film, but in real life: how would I react? These questions removed every obstacle between me and her. And this was how, out of all the many possibilities, only one remained in the end. How I believe it should be.

COMMENTS

FROM GIANNI ZANASI

This is not, clearly, a film with a religious slant. It is not a film about one's ability to believe in God. It is, rather, about the ability to Continue To Believe, even though we are no longer children. About our ability to feel, to imagine. The Madonna in the film is not that of the Bible, it is, simply, "Lucia's Madonna". A schizophrenic expression of the ability to believe, typical of childhood, that Lucia has put aside for so long, but that returns to her, rightly seething, in order to prevent her from completely squeezing to death the "living" part of her. no one else could have appeared to her. What I think we find so fascinating with the Blessed Virgin - apart from the iconography instilled into us when we are children - is her intransigence. A gaze that has a limpidness of another era, which tells the modern



age held hostage to many compromises: you are not everything. A "Madonna" that calls to men and repeats a relentless ethical and existential message that no one wants to hear, that which, in the end, Lucia tells herself: «Lucia, you have to tell the truth, life is short».

I love Lucia for this reason, since she is still not absolutely certain what is happening to her, and because even though she has not yet realised it, and cannot do so because she is still living the experience, she has allowed herself to finally live her life to the full, with all the consequences this entails. Here we see the effort required to make room once more in our hearts for a complexity of feelings, and for the great mystery of feeling those things that we cannot see. ««