
L.A. Story ★ ★ ★

Oaks 6, Plaza

In this movie, wacky television weatherman Harris K. Telemacher (Steve Martin) falls in love with visiting British journalist Sara McDowel (Victoria Tennant). But the real romance here is between writer/star Martin and the city of Los Angeles.

Martin affectionately skewers the quirky habits of that town's inhabitants through an endless series of satirical jabs and fantasy sequences. Harris gives toupee and car-phone advisory reports during his weather broadcasts. He also makes performance-art videos with a friend that consist solely of shots of him roller-skating around art objects in local museums.

Furthermore, Harris must deal



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Steve Martin needs a sign to tell him how to treat a lady in *L.A. STORY*. Cheez, what a goof... Notice the full moon?

with a trendy restaurant (L'Idiot) that demands a complete background check before granting him a reservation, a very polite criminal ("Hi, I'm Bob. I'll be your mugger.") and the latest craze: enemas.

All this silliness is amusing, but it undercuts the romantic do si do between Harris and Sara. Other obstacles in their path include her unresolved relationship with an ex-husband and his dalliance with a bouncy young woman

named SanDeE (Sarah Jessica Parker).

SanDeE — who insists that her name be spelled in that manner — is this movie's freshest creation. She is constantly jumping around and squealing with childish delight. Harris knows that SanDeE is too young for him, yet he can't resist her easy-going manner and thoroughly uncomplicated view of life. When Harris and she are going away for the weekend, he says it should be strictly as friends and that they shouldn't make love. "Okay," she says, "we'll just have sex."

That's just one example of the witty dialogue in this movie. *L.A. Story* is the first writing project for Martin since the deservedly praised *Roxanne*. While that movie was breezily romantic, this is much better at being drolly amusing.

Martin's observations about L.A. are invariably more amusing and on-target than his insights into love. Even if the romance is more sappy than sophisticated, who couldn't enjoy a movie that quotes a talking freeway traffic sign almost as much as it quotes Shakespeare? *L.A. Story* has enough style and charm to overcome the gooshy heart at its center.

Michael Giltz

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Jeremiah 17:9

Happy Valentine's Day from AP-PLAUSE!