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LEKTION I KÄRLEK, EN (Lesson in Love), Sweden, 1953

Cert: X. *dist:* Cross Channel. *p.c.:* Svensk Filmindustri. *p:* Carl Anders Dymling. *director of production:* Allan Ekelund. *d/sc:* Ingmar Bergman. *ph:* Martin Bodin, Bengt Nordwal. *ed:* Oscar Rosander. *a.d.:* P. A. Lundgren. *m:* Dag Wirén. *sd:* Sven Hansen. *l.p.:* Eva Dahlbeck (*Marianne*), Gunnar Björnstrand (*David Erneman*), Yvonne Lombard (*Suzanne*), Harriet Andersson (*Nix*), Ake Grönberg (*Carl-Adam*), Olof Winnerstrand (*Mr. Erneman Sur.*), Birgitte Reimer (*Lise*), Renée Björling (*Mrs. Erneman Sur.*), John Elfström (*Sam*), Dagmar Ebbesen (*Nurse*), Helge Hagerman (*Commercial Traveller*). 8,550 ft. 95 mins.

David Erneman, a well-known gynaecologist, and his wife Marianne are on the point of parting. David has begun to feel his age a little, and to reassure himself of his own potency has turned to other distractions, principally an affaire with Suzanne, one of his patients. Marianne, feeling slighted, proposes to return to the artist, Carl-Adam, whom she jilted years ago, in order to teach David a lesson. Their fifteen-year-old daughter Nix, tired of her parents' quarrels and promiscuity, pricks her father's vanity by telling him that Marianne is being unfaithful to him. Eventually, through each of them trying to arouse the other's jealousy, they are reconciled.

Bergman's first comedy, though as full of movement and business as any of his films, is a very minor achievement. It bears, at the outset, certain superficial resemblances to the later and more disciplined *Smiles of a Summer Night*: the Björnstrand stereotype in the lead, sensual and slightly ridiculous; Eva Dahlbeck as the dominating, mercurial and desirable woman of the world (this time an artist's model); the confused and quarrelling pursuit of sexual gratification. But there the resemblances end, and the rest is charmless parody and fumbled execution. Comedy of morals calls for credible strategy, wit and strict discipline, but *Lesson in Love* is as vulgar, privately entertaining and ultimately tedious as a game of charades at an inebriate house party. Bergman's script, though it has good ideas, is cluttered with second-rate epigrams on life, and meanders hopelessly in a maze of flash-backs. The climax, with the reconciled couple spending the night at an hotel and a Cupid placing a don't disturb sign on the door, is unforgivably banal; and several of the performances are on an equally unsubtle level. Björnstrand's astringent comedy personality is frequently smothered by knockabout farce; Harriet Andersson is brilliant in the unrewarding and largely irrelevant part of the tomboy daughter; and Eva Dahlbeck alone manages to negotiate the unnerving switches from sophistication to low comedy with consummate ease.

Suitability: A. P. J. D.

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