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ADORABLE JULIA

(France/Austria/1963) 106 minutes

French dialogue, English titles. \$30.00

Directed by Alfred Weidenmann - Screenplay by Marc-Gilbert Sauvajo - based on the book "Theatre" by W. Somerset Maugham, as well as characters in miscellaneous short stories by Maugham and Guy Bouton ("Theatre" was published abroad as "The Comedienne") - Cinematography by Werner Krein - English Sub-Titles by Herman G. Weinberg and Robert Terry. Players: *Lili Palmer, Charles Boyer, Jean Sorel, Jeanne Valerie and Gilbert Sauvain as "Marc"*.

As an actress fighting an apparently losing battle with encroaching middle age (and dreaming of the day when she can eat fattening junk food without worrying about her public figure), Lili Palmer, in this refreshing re-telling of Maugham's stories of the actress, Julia Marlowe, pretends to herself and the press that her near-nineteen-year-old son is fifteen and even muses over the possibilities of keeping him tiny with gin and cigarettes. She takes a lover only slightly older than the true age of her off-spring, deliberately places herself in what used to be called, euphemistically, a "compromising position," and later muses with evident delight, "... Raped! Raped after twenty years of marriage! Well, you're either desirable or you're not!"

The difference is in the way Miss Palmer plays Julia. Waspish Maugham made her out as an out-and-out bitch, but Lili plays her mostly for laughs, and the director uses the device of letting the film audience know what she is truly thinking, as opposed to what she is saying and doing, adding much sardonic comedy as well as psychological revelations that are both humorous and insightful.

Charles Boyer, in one of his warmest, latter-day roles, remarks that their son is growing and Miss Palmer mutters through clenched teeth, "Yes! Unfortunately!" The highlight of the book was a scene where Julia, on a bored whim, tried to seduce an old admirer who simply refused to be seduced. In the book she bitterly considered the possibilities of his impotence or homosexuality. In the film the scene has been re-written for laughs. After she has been spurned by the asexual ascetic, she tells us in one of many asides, "... My God! In another minute . . . I would have been stark naked and I don't know *how* I would have gotten out of that one . . ."

Oh come off it, Julia! You'd have thought of something. -GDW