

Document Citation

Title	Pochti lyubovna istorya
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Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1980 Jun 11
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Pochti lyubovna istorya (Almost a love story), Zahariev, Eduard, 1980

Pochti Lyubovna Istorya

(Almost A Love Story)
(BULGARIA-COLOR)

Cannes, May 22.

A Bulgarofilm Production. Suvremenik Film Group. Sofia: world rights, Bulgarofilm, Sofia. Features entire cast. Directed by Eduard Zahariev. Screenplay, Zahariev, Georgi Danailov, Georgi Mishev; camera (color), Georgi Nikolov; sets, Peter Goranov; music, Mitko Sterev. Reviewed at Cannes Film Festival (Market), May 22, '80. Running time: **90 MINS.**

Cast: Marianna Dimitrova (Pavlina), Yavor Spassov (Vlado), Grigor Vachkov (the Father).

Back in 1976, at the November Tehran Film Festival, Bulgarian thespis Marianna Dimitrova and Grigor Vachkov garnered kudos for their costarring performances in Eduard Zahariev's "Manly Times," a tale of the mountains penned by Nikolai Haitov that dealt with a kidnapping of a bride by a rugged, soft-hearted brigand. Now they're back again in Zahariev's "Almost A Love Story" as opponents in a kind of Romeo-and-Juliet story.

Billed as a psychological drama, pic deals with a working girl in a cannery who falls in love with the

factory director's son, whom the father wants to go to the university and make something out of himself. The father even pays his hired help to kidnap the girl after a lovers' meeting and take her home to her own parents in a distant village, but the stubborn girl is back again to prove she can't be pushed around easily. Then the potential father-in-law tries to bribe her, which doesn't work either, and finally he hopes she will simply listen to his reasons for preferring that his son marry a city-girl. When everything else fails, he fires her — but personal friends at the factory rise up in protest to protect her.

The twist is that the son isn't mature enough to know what's going on about him. When he attempts to bring the girl into his own circle of better educated friends, the passion begins to cool — and the scene is set for a tragic, sentimental ending.

Credits are top grade, but story starts to go downhill about the middle when things become a bit too predictable. Zahariev has made better, but the traces of a fine storyteller are there just the same. A natural for Bulgarian Film Weeks.

—Holl.