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NEW LINE CINEMA

'La Rupture,' Melodrama, Arrives at the Playboy

By ARCHER WINSTEN

"La Rupture" (The Breakup), at the Playboy Theater, puts Stephane Audran, wife of the director, Claude Chabrol, through severe trials, but nothing beyond her very considerable powers of resistance.

The picture opens with her husband, Charles (Jean-Claude Drouot), staggering out of his bedroom and almost absent-mindedly choking her. No reason is given, though he does look certifiably insane. Next he grabs their child and throws it against a wall with sufficient force to fracture the skull and break some bones. At this point Helen (Stephane Audran), who has been urging him to calm himself, batters him into submission with an iron frying pan.

Obviously this is a marriage that is in trouble.

Helen calls for divorce and a lawyer.

Grandpa Wants Child

His parents also desire a divorce for the son they think she has ruined, and the grandfather begins to plan to gain possession of his grandson by fair means or foul, mostly foul. A man of no scruples, Paul Thomas (Jean-Pierre Cassel), is hired to besmirch Helen enough to force a court to take away her child.

Most of the action takes place in an old, cheap boarding house in which Helen has taken residence to be near the hospital where her son is recovering. Three old ladies, incessantly spying, gossiping and playing tarot cards, look upon her with suspicion. Paul Thomas, pre-

'La Rupture'

A New Line Cinema release. Produced by Andre Genves. Directed by Claude Chabrol. Screenplay by Chabrol from the novel by Charlotte Armstrong. Cast: Stephane Audran, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Michel Bouquet, Marguerite Cassan, Jean-Claude Drouot, Annie Cordy, Jean Carmet, Katia Romanoff, Mario David, Angelo Ananti, Catherine Rouvel, and Dominique Zardi. 125 minutes. Not rated by MPAA.

tending to be mortally ill and sympathetic to Helen, spies on her enough to learn that she's not about to discredit herself. He has to do it with tricks.

So we're off to a finale of operatic melodramatics with virtue rewarded, villainy sure to be punished, and irony seen in the death of the innocent.

It is a shocking reversal to find that the long-admired Cassel is here such a figure of evil. The father-in-law, played by Michel Bouquet with thin-lipped, barely suppressed hatred, is a type easy to dislike. Only Stephane Audran, and a couple of minor characters, the doctor and the actor, are humanly tolerable. It's the kind of picture that keeps you interested and partisan, if not overwhelmed. Chabrol has made an addition to his gallery of infamy.



Jean-Claude Drouot in an LSD-induced rage in "La Rupture."

CLAUDE CHABROL'S

LA RUPTURE
(THE BREAKUP)

Starring
STEPHANE AUDRAN · JEAN-PIERRE CASSEL

Directed and Written by CLAUDE CHABROL · Photography by JEAN RABIER
Produced by FILMS la BOETIE In COLOR from NEW LINE CINEMA
FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

"EMOTIONALLY HARROWING...BRUTAL!"
— Canby, New York Times

"LIKE 'LE BOUCHER', IT'S A FILM OF STARK TERROR!"
— Strick, Sight & Sound

"ONE OF THE GREAT FINDS!" — Women's Wear Daily

"AN EERIE, FRIGHTENING, CRAZILY FUNNY MOVIE!"
— Eliot, Chicago Daily News