



Courtesy Photo
Marina (Demi Moore) and Dr. Alex Tremor (Jeff Daniels) partake in countertop conversation (left), and she and her husband Leo Lemke (George Dzundza) share a butcher-shop laugh.

Butcher's Wife falls short without an antagonist

★ 1/2
FILM: *The Butcher's Wife* is currently showing at Movies 12 at the Gateway Mall. Rated PG-13

••• don't bother. ••• wait to rent.
••••• worth the time. ••••• a must see



The Butcher's Wife is supposed to be a magical fairy tale, but the aspect of surprise that is necessary to make a situation magical is completely missing.

Demi Moore plays the beautiful, naive clairvoyant from North Carolina, named Marina, who follows the man she thinks she saw in a dream to his sunny and quirky neighborhood in Manhattan. She follows him because she dreamt that she was to marry him. He is played by the older,

overweight, kindly butcher, played by veteran character actor George Dzundza.

We soon learn that, naturally, Dzundza is not her man of destiny. Rather, it is the better-looking psychiatrist Alex Tremor, played by Jeff Daniels, who is to fill her life with happiness.

Marina's purpose in this borough is to be the matchmaker of the new age. But as soon as she arrives, everyone's fate falls mystically into a romantic order. Therein lies the major problem in the movie.

From the beginning, every character is set up to see a happy ending, all of which are telegraphed within five minutes of their introduction. There's no suspense or wonderment about how or if it will happen. It's simply inevitable.

And just who are these char-

acters? They're not fleshed out or built up, giving them any sense of consequence. They're merely outlines which conveniently form a friendly group of nothing more than clowns.

She runs around charming the pants off everyone and having all the other people realize that their lives were pointless before they met her.

They all have tons of warmth and kindness. I think I might have even gotten a cavity

watching this movie.

The plot bears more than a passing resemblance to *Moonstruck*. There's an initially mismatched couple and the object is to get those who belong together to fall in love. The difference is that in *Moonstruck*, the characters and situations were based in a reality that was readily identifiable to audience members.

In *The Butcher's Wife*, however, there is no grounding of any kind. Each character has traits which are thrust upon them simply to make them unusual and endearing.

You may say, "It's a fantasy. What do you expect?" Granted, but shouldn't a fantasy have something to say about or have some relation to reality? With no purpose involved in the fantasy, it remains merely trivial.

The jokes are funny to a point, but they get repetitive quickly. One such joke is Dr. Tremor having each member of the neighborhood come in and tell him about all the mystical things that are happening to them. He freaks out every time he realizes that Marina is the source of their newfound happiness. This happens over and over and over again.

In basic creative writing we're taught that stories have a protagonist and an antagonist. Where's the antagonist here? I couldn't find a convincing one. The movie's merely a string of insignificant and cute incidents leading up to very little.

By Lucas J. Gutman
Emerald Contributor

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