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My Old Lady – Review

Directed by **veteran** playwright Israel Horovitz, *My Old Lady* takes **place** in Paris, where three-times divorced, unpublished **author** Mathias Gold (Kevin Kline) arrives in order to sell a large, expensive apartment left to him by his estranged father. Complications soon arise: thanks to an obscure property **law** in the country and a **deal** made many years ago, the apartment is legally the property of its resident, the elderly Mathilde Girard (played by a wonderful Maggie Smith) until she dies.

Mathias, for his part, is 57 years old, a semi-recovering alcoholic, with no real **friends**, no **affection** for any of his ex-wives, and most importantly, no money; his situation is a quite desperate one, so Mathilde agrees to let him stay in the apartment as long as he can pay rent. Kristin Scott Thomas completes an impressive cast as Mathilde's **daughter**, Chloé, who also lives in the apartment and is not at all pleased by Mathias's **arrival**, nor her mother's **decision** to let this strange American stay with the two of them.

Mathias **initially** steals and sells **furniture** from the **apartment** in order to pay rent to Mathilde, and later finds refuge in her wine **cellar**. Eventually, however, he and Chloé begin to bond, while Smith, as Mathilde, offers **wisdom** the pair are both in great need of.

Revelations regarding the exact nature of the deal made by Mathias's father with Mathilde drive the plot **forward**, and each of the three **principal** cast members make the most of their dialogue-heavy roles. (Horovitz has written over 70 plays, so it's unsurprising that *My Old Lady*, originally a play itself, evokes a work written for the **stage**.) What's more, Paris is **beautiful**, providing its actors a handsome backdrop for the emotional **catharsis** of the film's gripping final third.

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