

The Law According to Lidia Poët (2023)



Lidia earns her law degree but is prevented from practicing, so she turns to her lawyer bro-in-law to represent defendants. (c) Netflix

Feminists repelled by the apostle Paul's sexist views will enjoy the six-part Italian series based loosely on the life of Italy's first woman lawyer Lidia Poët. As played by Matilda DeAngelis, she is a self-confident woman with a clever mind a knowledge of advances in criminology, such as the value of fingerprints, unknown to the legal and law enforcement agents of the time. In a number of raunchy scenes she shows that she also practiced a free love in which women could enter into sexual relationships as freely as men. There is more than a touch of Sherlock Holmes in each episode, with Lidia cleverly solving a series of crimes.

In the first episode. set in 1883 in Turin, Lidia's sexual tryst is interrupted by the mother of an accused murderer knocking on the bedroom door. Upon opening it the woman asks if she is the lawyer, and to Lidia's affirmative answer, says, "I was told you don't charge much, less than a man, I mean." The woman's son Pietro is accused of murdering Adele the

principal dancer of the ballet theater. The chauvinist prosecutor admonishes Lidia for taking the case, and soon she is prevented from appearing in court by the revocation of her license, the high court declaring, "Women are not supposed to meddle in a man's world. These duties are not suited to their organic design and prevent them from performing and carrying out other tasks within a family role." Old St. Paul couldn't have put it better himself.

Lidia's brother Enrico is a lawyer, so she continues to investigate the case and work through him at court. Her solving the mystery or who-dunnit would do credit even to Sherlock Holmes. And so she continues throughout the series, working in the background as she solves one murder case after another. One of them is a woman who also fights patriarchy by enrolling in a university rather than give in to the pressure for her to marry and serve as a housewife and mother. Like Lia, she runs up against the smug patriarch that declares, "If God wanted you to be a lawyer he would not have made you a woman." No wonder why many people gave up belief in God, with the Deity seen as supporter of so many injustices!

Lidia becomes involved in case after case, always having to battle on two fronts—the perpetrators of the various murders and at the same time the patriarch that belittles her skills because she is a woman. Actress Matilda DeAngelis is memorable as the proto feminist who refuses to :stay in her place." I hope she can catch the attention of Hollywood filmmakers and thus garner a wider following. The 6-episode procedural is directed by Matteo Rovere and Letizia Lamartire. Due to the frank love scenes, church groups probably would be hesitant to embrace the series, but I do recommend it for personal enjoyment, as well as learning about an Italian woman whose struggles for sexual equality deserves to be remembered and celebrated.

Available on Netflix. No questions for this review.