previous decades, like twelve angry men, serpico or the verdict. but, in the same time, almost any of such pearls is followed by stinkers that hamper lumet's reputation. a stranger among us, 1992 rip-off of peter weir's witness, belongs to the latter category. the heroine of this movie is emily eden (melanie griffith), tough lady cop who sometimes shows too much enthusiasm in battling bad guys on the streets of new york . during one of such actions , her partner nick (jamey sheridan) got hurt and as a result , she becomes depressed . in order to help her recover , bosses give her rather easy task of locating missing jeweller who belonged to hassidic iew community, emily starts investigation and soon realises that the case involves murder, concluding that the perpetrator belongs to community, she decides to go undercover, that isn't easy, because her modern manners are colliding with traditionalist ways, things get even more complicated when she develops feelings for young cabalistic scholar ariel (eric thal). using peter weir's formula isn't the greatest flaw of this film, even the lame and unispiring crime mystery subplot works to the certain

sydney lumet is the director whose work happens to be of varied quality, he is praised for some of the most important films of the

extent . but the worst insult to viewer's audience is terrible miscasting of melanie griffith . the author of this review never liked this actress very much , but she was at least tolerable in some of her roles . role of emily eden , unfortunately , isn't one of them . first of all , she can't pass for tough nypd street fighter , and her attempt to pass for orthodox jewish woman isn't much better . screenplay by robert j . avrech makes things even worse with some formulaic red herring subplots (scene involving two italian gangsters was almost too painful to watch) . but , on the other hand , other actors are more convincing (lee richardson as an old rabbi , thal as ariel and charming mia sara as his intended bride) , and the photography by andrzej bartkowiak very effectively creates atmosphere of warmth when the scenes take place in hassidic community . also , the film might educate viewers about hassidic culture . that is the only thing that prevents it from turning into total waste of time .