



Molly Ringwald is Andie Walsh, a girl from the wrong side of the tracks who is invited to the prom by one of the "richies" at her high school.



the movies
Dan Greenberg

'Pretty in Pink' is pretty insipid teen romance

"Pretty in Pink" may be PG-13 in the Motion Picture Rating Council's book, but it's BRS (boring, ridiculous and simple-minded) in mine.

With the new crop of spring and summer films on its way, let's hope that Molly Ringwald's latest is not a harbinger of a miserable harvest.

This mindless story of teen-age romance supposedly was written by John Hughes, scenarist for "National Lampoon's Vacation," "Mr. Mom," "Sixteen Candles," "The Breakfast Club" and "Weird Science." Actually, he was fronting for an 8-year-old, which is the intellectual level of the plot.

Andie Walsh (Ringwald) lives on the wrong side of the tracks in a Chicago suburb. Just to make sure audiences understand "the other side of the tracks," Amtrak rumbles through with half the system's scheduled runs. The engine turns in one of the film's best performances. Do they give Oscars to trains?

ANDIE'S FATHER, Jack Walsh (Harry Dean Stanton), spends most of his time lying around in a terminal stupor because his wife left him four years ago.

The Walsh family doesn't have much money (Jack can't hold a job, but Andie works in a record store after school) so Andie makes her own clothes — and they look it. By some unexplained largesse, she attends a pretty fancy school primarily populated by "richies" — kids from wealthy families. No Amtrak in their living rooms. They live on the right side of the tracks, and far from them.

Andie's dowdy, unfashionable clothes supposedly represent her individuality and the ability to be her own person. Of course, the rich kids ridicule her appearance. They don't like her high grades either. But lurking under Andie's individuality is basic envy and desire for the good life.

Andie's big moment comes when illogically shy (for a self-possessed rich kid) Blane McDonough (Andrew McCarthy) asks her for a date.

One thing leads to another and, are you ready, Blane asks her to the prom, at which point she attacks him with some lustful and open-mouth kissing. If all this seems dull, you've got the right picture.

To keep the audience from joining Walsh in terminal stupor, there are a couple of decent supporting roles, at least as decent as you can get when the script is written with an 8-year-old's view of teen-age romance.

DUCKY DALES (Jon Cryer) is a madcap kid, wildly in love with Andie, who treats him as a favored brother, much to his chagrin. Ducky is wacky enough for a few laughs and, in the record shop where Andie works, does an active lip synch to Otis Redding's "Try a Little Tenderness."

The store manager, Iona (Annie Potts), is pretty funny with her funky hairdos and fond memories of the Sixties. Amidst all her nutty moments, she manages to be Andie's surrogate mother.

Aside from those two, however, not much happens. Miraculously, after Andie has a good heart-to-heart, daughter-father talk one night, Jack suddenly has manly depression. Blane follows with an unprovoked and barely understood attack of class guilt and cancels his prom date with Andie. Excellent stuff.

Reviews are supposed to discuss acting, but that category does not apply to "Pretty in Pink." Ringwald and McCarthy are noted graduates of the Lip-Quiver School of Acting. He manages twitely little smiles while she grows her lip glass.

What Harry Dean Stanton is doing in a film like this escapes me. It must have been money because it certainly isn't the role. Faced with Walsh's character and lines, Stanton took the bucks and allowed himself to be photographed in various somnolent states.

THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS render the title tune in a mellow-rock rendition characteristic of the soundtrack, which is not as loud as one might expect for a teen movie.

Although "Pretty in Pink" lacks plot, action and character, on the plus side it lacks lots of cars hot-rodding around. It will take more than that to save this one.

So, keep your ticket money for something decent. Almost anything will qualify.



Andrew McCarthy is Blane McDonough, the rich kid who withdraws his prom-night invitation after he decides to stick with his own upper class.

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