



LOUISE SNIDER

Plot incredible in 'Cassandra'

No one can say that the producers didn't warn the audience right from the start with the title, "The Cassandra Crossing" (PG). Cassandra was a Greek goddess who foretold the future but was ignored by everyone. She was a gloomy prophet who specialized in foretelling disasters, hence, "The Cassandra Crossing."

The all-star cast proves once again that more isn't necessarily better. Sophia Loren, Burt Lancaster, O. J. Simpson, Richard Harris and Ava Gardner are among the luminaries. They wrestle with an incredible plot and dialogue as scintillating as a taped phone message.

The movie begins with two terrorists breaking into a U.S. enclave in Geneva. A container of a lethal, contagious virus is broken during the shootout. One terrorist is fatally wounded. The other, infected with the pneumonic plague virus, escapes and boards a train bound for Paris.

Burt Lancaster as stolid Colonel Mackenzie arrives on the scene early to take charge of things. He's greeted with the immortal line, "Thank God, you're here." Not to be outdone, he responds to most calls and queries with his best line, "I'll handle it now."

INGRID THULIN as Elena, a bloodless Swiss doctor, snipes at Mackenzie as they both monitor the train's progress (and the disease's) from a central control in Geneva.

Elena would like to stop the train and remove the passengers. Mackenzie informs her that "no civilized country in Europe" would allow the plague-ridden train to stop and discharge its passengers. Hence, they shut the train to Poland.

The implications of this are fascinating: (1) Poland is not civilized, or (2) Poland is not in Europe. Take your choice. Mackenzie does stop the train in Nuremberg, but only to seal it shut after placing medical supplies and armed guards aboard. It then resumes its journey to Poland, wherever that is.

Meanwhile the terrorist, who naturally is fond of children, manages to get hold of, or touch every child on the train, assuring that each will become infected. He also steals water from a dog in the baggage car and coughs into a serving bowl of rice in the kitchen.

RICHARD HARRIS, out of his buckskins, is a neurosurgeon, the only doctor on the train. By a strange quirk, his wife Sophia Loren is aboard also. She's a successful novelist. During much of the journey, he exhibits a flair with words, and she ministers to the sick passengers.

As for O. J. Simpson, what would you expect him to be? He's an FBI man disguised as a priest on the trail of a narcotics smuggler (Martin Sheen) who is the lover of Nicole (Ava Gardner) who is the wife of the German industrialist who manufactured the guns used by the guards aboard the train. Got that?

To get to its destination in Poland, the train must traverse the Cassandra Crossing, a rickety high-span bridge over a deep gorge. The conductor and one passenger know it's unsafe. "All the people who used to live under it have moved away," they say ominously.

The doctor radios these fears to Mackenzie, who insists the bridge is safe. The anxious passengers become testy, and fight with the guards in an attempt to take over the train and stop it before it reaches the bridge.

Sophia Loren, displaying an amazing knowledge of fuels and engineering, helps Richard Harris blast a hole through the floor and uncouple the last few cars (in which they're riding) from the rest of the train. Just in time too, 'cause guess what happens when the engine crosses the bridge?

Moral: Never trust a terrorist who steals water from a bassett hound, or "we'll cross that bridge when we come to it" presumes too much.

GLIMPSES

NEW RELEASES

THE ENFORCER (R). Violence and gun play in the "Dirty Harry" manner as Clint Eastwood shoots it out with a terrorist gang in San Francisco in this third film in the series.

FREAKY FRIDAY (G). Disney movie about a mother and her teenage daughter who change roles (and bodies) for a day. Lots of fun and a little insight as each learns about the other's problems.

KING KONG (PG). The big ape is back again with his same old destructive but sensitive personality. Jessica Lange plays the love in his life. Revised version with some tongue-in-cheek dialogue.

LUMIERE (R). Jeanne Moreau wrote, acted and directed this low-key movie that takes a soft-focus look at the lives of four women friends, their careers and loves. In French with English subtitles.

NETWORK (R). Pierre satire attacking the television industry and mass media generally. Top performances by Peter Finch, Faye Dunaway and William Holden in fast paced, grimly humorous film.

THE OUTER SPACE CONNECTION (G). Rod Serling narrates film version of popular book citing "evidence" that beings from outer space visited earth.

THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN (PG). More clowning with Inspector Clouseau (Peter Sellers) who fumbles his way to victory—this time against the demented chief inspector who would destroy the world unless he's given Clouseau, dead or alive.

ROCKY (PG). Human warmth and exciting drama combine in this stirring film about a no-name boxer who gets a chance at a title bout. Acting accolades to entire cast and especially Stallone as Rocky.

SILVER STREAK (PG). Gene Wilder, Richard Pryor, Patrick McGowan and Jill Clayburgh make tracks in this comedy-thriller about murder and mayhem on a train, and sometimes off.

A STAR IS BORN (R). Long-awaited remake with Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson as rock stars (rather than movie stars) whose careers lead in different directions.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

G General audiences admitted.
PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.
X No one under 18 admitted.

Spring Fiesta enlivens New Orleans

New Orleans, a city known for the boisterous merrymaking of Mardi Gras, is equally inviting in April when the annual Spring Fiesta rekindles the charm of yesterday and the mood is one of happy reflections and festive celebrations.

Dates of the 41st Spring Fiesta are April 15-May 3. Festivities begin in Jackson Square at 7 p.m. April 15 with the Coronation of the Queen and presentation of her court, followed by a colorful historical

pageant and a "Sight in Old New Orleans" parade through the streets of the Vieux Carre.

While horse-drawn carriages filled with revelers in antebellum costumes, gallants on horseback, floats and bands wind their way by torchlight through the narrow streets, girls in crinolines and long dresses wave from wrought iron balconies. They are often joined by informal serenaders who entertain the crowds with songs.

During the next 18 days, Spring

Fiesta visitors will have the rare opportunity to enter elegant town houses in the Vieux Carre, some dating back to 1790 and beautifully restored by proud owners. After-dark strolls through candle-lit patios, amid the greetings of costumed hostesses and the fragrance of nightblooming jasmine, sweet olive and myriads of exotic plants, are a memorable experience.

THE FIESTA also features tours of stately homes in the Garden District. Old Southern homes tours in the up-

town or university section, and weekend bus trips to plantations along the winding Mississippi and bayous.

An art exhibition in Pirates Alley and Jackson Square by New Orleans and Louisiana artists, a river cruise aboard Steamboat Natchez, and the ever-present attractions of gourmet dining, Dixieland music, antique shops and Bourbon Street add spice to the Spring Fiesta adventure.

Information and advance tickets for fiesta tours may be secured from Spring Fiesta Headquarters, 529 St. Ann Street, New Orleans, La. 70116.

Activities book free

"Gee, Mom, there's never anything to do in winter time!" won't be the cry of the kids this winter season. Or the adults either, according to the Southeast Michigan Travel and Tourist Association.

Reason is, there's a free book to winter activities available from the association "which describes things to see and do, close to home in southeast Michigan."

From downhill skiing to cross-country, from shopping and browsing to

theater, from outstanding accommodations to exciting attractions, "Winter in Southeast Michigan" offers information for every member of the family.

Listed are more than 130 events taking place in the nine-county southeast Michigan area.

Write Southeast Michigan Travel and Tourist Association at Suite 312, State of Michigan Plaza, 1200 Sixth Ave., Detroit 48226 for your free copy.

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