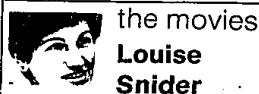




Jacqueline Bisset as Mrs. Burroughs and Andrew McCarthy as Jonathan Ogner have an affair, but her characterization is never fully explained, in "Class."



the movies
Louise Snider

'Class' does not live up to its title

Louise Snider is on vacation. Guest critic is Dan Greenberg, film instructor at the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills.

By Dan Greenberg
special writer

"Class," featuring Jacqueline Bisset and Cliff Robertson, is just another tacky, adolescent summer comedy that never decides what it wants to be when it grows up. It lacks what its title promises.

The plot's humorous potential is never fulfilled. A young, bright but inexperienced prep school student, Jonathan Ogner (Andrew McCarthy), is cajoled, threatened and led to sexual experience by his wealthy, worldly roommate, Skip Burroughs (Rob Lowe). Skip's efforts are successful, unbeknownst to him, with Mother Burroughs' (Jacqueline Bisset) help.

Bisset's contribution to wet T-shirts in "The Deep" is not repeated here for May-December romance. Rather, this gorgeous actress performs unevenly, one moment worn and trashy, the next lovely and luminous, but never quite clear as to why she's shacking up with her son's roommate. We can't even be sure it's just for fun. That uneven quality permeates the writing (Jim Kouf and David Greenwalt) and directing (Lewis John Carlino) of the entire film. The first 40 minutes is episodic with entertaining "Animal House"-style slapstick serving to avoid the basic plot complication: An older woman sexually educating a younger man.

WHEN THE FILM tries to come to grips with that situation, it's too late. Too much time has elapsed dragging red herrings across the old plot trail. A teasing scandal mistakenly perceived as a narcotics investigation, the problems of growing up and getting accepted to Harvard, and the ever-present generation gap.

The film's greatest flaw is that we never learn why Mrs. Burroughs lived the life she did. From the acting, writing and directing, apparently the cast never discovered this central motivation either.

Not to worry. The boys have a good fight and a good laugh. That solves everything.

But, it is always a pleasure to look at Bisset. Rob Lowe is a charming and handsome young man who wears the weight of his riches well and manages, miraculously, to survive the wooden, deadening effect of his father, played with wooden and deadening success by Cliff Robertson.

Ah, well, it is summer time. The film has plenty of four-letter words and enough sexually suggestive sequences to please the adolescent in us all. One might complain that the sexual scenes were heavy on breathing effects and short on eroticism, but it was all worth a rather limp laugh.

So much for the film's redeeming commercial values. Catch it on the dollar nights.

what's at the movies

ATOR (PG). Epic adventure of myth, legend and magic starring Miles O'Keefe in the title role, with Sabrina Siani and Rita Brown.

CLASS (R). Romantic comedy about a young man who has an affair with an older woman who turns out to be his best friend's mother. Jacqueline Bisset, Cliff Robertson and Rob Lowe star.

COUP DE TORCHON (A CLEAN SLATE). Academy-Award nominee for best foreign-language film. Bertrand Tavernier directed comedy starring Philippe Noiret and Isabella Huppert.

FLASHDANCE (R). A determined young woman works as a welder by day and a dancer by night. Movie doesn't make too much sense but the dancing makes a terrific impact.

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S VACATION (R). Wally World, the world's greatest theme park, is the destination in this cross-country comedy starring Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo, Imogene Coca and Christie Brinkley.

OCTOPUSSY (PG). Roger Moore is again the dapper Agent 007 as he goes to India to crack an international jewel-smuggling operation in this 13th James Bond adventure. Also with Maud Adams.

PORKY'S—THE NEXT DAY (R). Raunchy gang members from Angel Beach High School tangle with school administrators, corrupt officials and their own active libidos.

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.

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