

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Less is Moore in Six Weeks

### Dudley Do-Good meets Ice Queen in mushy melodrama

Marshall Golden

Imagine, if you can, this scenario. A beautiful, single, middle-aged woman heads a multi-million dollar corporation that bears her name. She is the mother of a girl, 11, who is cuter than the proverbial bug's ear. The twosome has all that money can buy except for one thing: true happiness (can you hear the violins yet?). It seems that the daughter, who is gifted in everything, has leukemia and only six weeks to live (now you can hear them!).

The mother meets a political candidate with whom the most she has in common is her real-life last name (Moore). Together they devote enormous amounts of time and effort to increasing the girl's happiness. Not unpredictably, the girl has one last wish, (are you ready?): she has always wanted to dance the Snowflake Solo in the Nutcracker ballet. At the film's

climax the dying girl's wish comes true (at the Rockefeller Centre, of course) and in the audience, the mother cries, the candidate cries, and even the choreographer cries backstage.

Now, by this point you, the reader, are doing one of two things. Either you are crying or you are throwing up. If you are crying and you are happy that you are crying, go and see *Six Weeks*. If you are crying and don't know why, it's because you have been cleverly manipulated by a calculated, tear-jerking script. If you are throwing up, you are probably well-adjusted and too critical to buy this cinematic garbage.

*Six Weeks* is a film whose every scene, characterization and plot twist was created for the sole purpose of making you weep (and making somebody else rich). Now, there's nothing wrong with crying, but a film needs something more.

The conflict must be believable. The writers of this film, however, seem to have just arrived home from a vacation in Never-Never Land.

Dudley Moore is cuddly and adorable as the sensitive political candidate (a sensitive politician?) and Mary Tyler Moore has basically the same character she had in *Ordinary People*--everyone's favourite Ice Queen.

The film is so goody-goody and sugar-coated that it makes your teeth ache. By the end of the film I was dying to see one punch or hear one naughty word. Mary spent the entire film saying "Shoot!" instead of that unspeakable s-word. If you are the type of person who's loved by everybody's mother, and you're convinced that you're second in goodness only to Mother Theresa, go and see *Six Weeks*. Its goodness will leave you feeling little better than a child molester.



The Moore Brothers, Dudley and Mary Tyler, and dancing sidekick explore the limits of nausea.

## Through the Flower

Judy Chicago

Anchor Press

Jane Horsely

This autobiography, subtitled *My Struggle as a Woman Artist*, has been revised and updated. The book takes us from Judy Chicago's childhood to 1974, with an afterword from 1982. Judy Chicago is best known from *The Dinner Party*--a monumental piece that encapsulates the symbolic history of women's achievements and struggles in Western Civilization.

Worked on by a collective, *The Dinner Party* was meant to be a sort of reinterpretation of the Last Supper by those "who do the cooking". The guests were images on plates, a reference to the way in which history had consumed rather than revered women of achievement. It is a travelling exhibition (seen at the Art Gallery of Ontario last February), and there are several books available about the exhibition itself.

Judy Chicago details her upbringing in a non-conventional Jewish household in Chicago--her father was a Communist sympathizer and her mother, also politically active, was artistically oriented. She first encouraged Judy to develop an interest in art. Chicago describes her difficulties in being accepted by the art community while studying at UCLA. She experienced a conflict between the use of a formalist style with neutral content which would be noticed and the use of female imagery (vagina and womb symbolism) which was virtually ignored by art authorities who are predominantly male.

Chicago spent a lot of time and energy working with women, and inspiring them often, according to her, to be later rejected. She helped set up Womanspace, a women's cooperative gallery, and the Feminist

Studio Workshop (at California Art Institute), which later merged into Woman's Building. This building also housed feminist bookstores, performing groups, women's journals--it was a home for female culture. Judy Chicago believed that the only way for women to be able to

fully express themselves as women was to create a distinct environment for that expression which stands apart from the patriarchal structures of existing institutions. With access to the mechanisms of society, women can change their environment. Through art, Judy Chicago

and others feel they can contribute their values and attitudes as women to the culture in such a way as to affect society.

Beneath the rhetoric, *Through the Flower* is a success story which should interest anyone concerned with art, feminism and women's input into culture and more. With the flower as the symbol of femininity, used initially by Georgia O'Keefe, Judy Chicago reveals an inviting by undefined space. At this centre Chicago hopes the gulf between masculine and feminine can be bridged and healed in a new expression of humanity.

## BOOKMARKS

### Fifty Stories and A Piece of Advice

David Arnason

Turnstone Press

Jane Horsely

"Bill Gretchen won a TV set on a raffle a week before he died of leukemia."

*Fifty Stories and A Piece of Advice* really isn't that. Instead, this book is 17 stories and a collection of anecdotes.

One way to describe this book of uneven quality is in terms of its minimalist plot development. David Arnason, co-founder and editor of *Canadian Fiction* and professor of English at the University of Manitoba, seems most concerned with creating a mood, and evoking humanist concerns about the truth of history and about people's lives. Some of the stories are full of black humour and absurdity, like "The Washing Machine", and work well. Others aim for a bleak or mysterious undertone but are often incomplete. A strong story, "A Letter to History Teachers" is a great look at the opposition between recorded factual data of history and personal memory.

Arnason experiments with the narrative structure, developing parallel lines of plot in an intriguing manner. In "A German Lunatic on Top of the CPR Building", he interposes ruminations on the war mentality and lunatics, with illustrations of different types of female figures. "Binary Lovers" contrasts the seduction of a female student by a professor with the metaphysics of thoroughbred racing and numerical axioms.

Some stories concern the Icelandic fishing community around Lake Winnipeg and their belief in the supernatural (a fish that prophesizes); others talk about the garbagemen and the winos who sleep under bridges. The stories, as Arnason himself describes "The Last Story in the Book", lack plot development of the kind we expect, but they do have interesting characters and a distinctly Western Canadian flavour.

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*Discovery*, Harbourfront's annual poetry competition / auditioning, takes place on Jan. 11. Twenty-five names will be drawn at random from those collected by 8 p.m. that evening. Any unpublished poet may participate. The winner, chosen by a panel of writer / editors, will be invited to give a paid reading in a future regular reading. For information, call 364-5665.

## NEXT WEEK

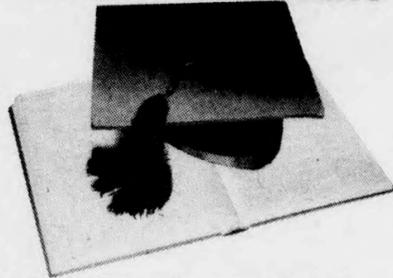
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