



SEE YOU IN THE MORNING

Halfway into *See You in the Morning*, the complicated new film from director Alan Pakula, someone tries to

make sense of the modern state of love and marriage. The best he can do is to compare it to musical chairs. When the music stops, you may suddenly find yourself surrounded by new faces — a new parent, new in-laws, new step-children, half-brothers and sisters. The modern American family has never been quite the same.

In this version of the game, there are two families playing. Psychiatrist Larry Livingston (Jeff Bridges) and his fashion model wife Jo (Farrah Fawcett) have two adorable young kids and live in a post-card perfect lakefront home in Maine. At least they do until Jo decides mystery is at the centre of what excites her in life and that marriage doesn't offer much mystery.

Concert pianist Peter Goodwin (David Dukes) and his aspiring photographer wife Beth (Alice Krige) have two slightly older but equally adorable children and live together in a very comfortable Upper East Side Manhattan townhouse. At least they do until the paralysis in one of Peter's hands provokes him to take dramatic action.

And so soon after the start of *See You in the Morning* — the title is probably ironic inasmuch as no one in this movie, or in life, can be sure of seeing anyone when they wake up — psychiatrist Larry and photographer Beth find themselves without mates and thrown together. Most of what follows is the alternately comic and wrenching story of how they and their extended families try, in the broadest sense, to overcome a sense of loss.



"I think we live in a world" says the 60 year old Pakula, one of America's most effective and unpredictable producer/directors, "where most of our paranoid fantasies have come true. I think that's the absolute truth of it."

"But I'm an American middle class Jew" he adds. "My father came over from Poland. I was

raised with a total belief in the American dream. And I still have that — in spite of my paranoia. It's kind of American innocence, and for all of us, I think, there is a continual loss of innocence."

The starting point with all of his films, he says, has always been a childlike desire to see the story on the big screen. That has led him,

over the past 25 years, to produce or direct such diverse films as the classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the psychotic thriller *Klute*, the political thriller *All the President's Men*, the Holocaust drama *Sophie's Choice* and, most recently, a screen version of the off-Broadway drama, *Orphans*.

Having now written as well as produced and directed *See You in the Morning* — and having gone through a divorce himself — that story is perhaps more personal than ever. Still, he insists, he has no favorites among his movies.

"I've never done a film where I didn't like something and I've never done a film where I didn't dislike something." If a particular film is a

success, he notes, you can do some of your worst work and it doesn't matter — because not many people will see it. "So it would be easier" he smiles "for me to make a complication of favorite sequences from my films."

Whatever story finally ends up on the screen is inevitably due in part to the actors in it. "There are several different kinds of directors" Pakula notes. "On the one end there's Hitchcock who planned everything to a point where he said when he started to shoot a film, it was anti-climactic. Then you go to the other end with someone like John Cassavettes who's just total improvisation. I like a mixture. I mean, I do plan a lot. And then I like to leave room for surprises."

If nothing else, *See You in the Morning* is a chock-a-block with good actors; not only Bridges and Fawcett and Alice Krige (who played the wealthy eccentric who pursued Mickey Rourke last year in *Barfly*, but Frances Sternhagen as the former mother-in-law Bridges can't stop loving. Drew Barrymore and Lukas Haas as Krige's two children, and Linda Lavin and Theodore Bikel in major supporting roles.

"We'll have discussions about the character and the content of the scene" says Pakula, explaining how he directs actors "but I won't necessarily tell them what to do or where to go. The first thing is to see where their instincts are going to lead them.

"If their instincts lead them to the same place I was going to tell them to go, then they'll do it better for the fact that it came out of them. If it doesn't lead them to the same thing, well — they may be so into the character they will do something better I would have thought of. And that's always exciting."

— Lyle Slack

